

20 INSIGHTS

Into Effective Entrepreneurship

Sharing my real and raw learnings from the first five years of running my own business.



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**The hard truths that you need to hear,
so you're prepared for everything.**

Contents

Welcome!	3
Insight 1: It all starts with passion.....	6
Insight 2: You also have to be hungry.....	12
Insight 3: Nothing is perfect – just start.....	17
Insight 4: Don't compare yourself to other businesses.....	22
Insight 5: Where you end up probably won't be where you thought you would.....	26
Insight 6: Failure is just a part of it.....	30
Insight 7: Seek a Coach or Mentor.....	35
Insight 8: Others just won't fully understand.....	40
Insight 9: Your 'gut instinct' is a real thing.....	44
Insight 10: Start your business as a side gig.....	47
Insight 11: Did I mention it takes a lot of your time?.....	51
Insight 12: One eye on now. One eye on tomorrow.....	56
Insight 13: Get ready for the rollercoaster.....	61
Insight 14: Set expectations with everyone.....	65
Insight 15: Plan, plan, plan and be always ready to adapt.....	72
Insight 16: Hire fast.....	76
Insight 17: humans are your most important business asset.....	81
Insight 18: surround yourself with success.....	88
Insight 19: celebrate your wins.....	92
Insight 20: Enjoy the entrepreneurial ride!.....	95
Is it worth it?.....	97



Welcome!

So – you want to start a business?

That sounds great. As a fellow entrepreneur, I love the idea and I'd recommend it to anyone who has the real fire to venture down this phenomenal yet challenging path.

However, before you do, can I take you through my 20 key insights from the personal experience I've gained from the first five years of owning my own?

I promise they'll help you prepare yourself well for the road ahead.

But before you think it...

NO. This is NOT a self-help book and NO, I'm not saying my way is right or wrong or will be the same as yours.

However, over the last few years, I've seen and witnessed a lot – and there were so many times where I found myself saying:

"I wish I had have known this before I started. I would've been better prepared."

"If only I knew this, I wouldn't have made that mistake."

"Why didn't someone tell me about this?"

Well, now I'm somewhat that someone! So, I figured I would write this all down so that people who were about to embark on this self-made journey could have the opportunity to learn from what I've been through.



You see, the entrepreneurial journey is quite a challenging one.

I'm not going to lie.

The stats are always changing but I hear that the majority of new businesses don't survive the first few years – and that's understandable, given what I've seen. If it wasn't hard, I guess everyone would do it, right?

In saying that, the journey can also be an incredibly rewarding one too, so long as you're well-equipped with the right mindset and well-prepared with the right skillset.

So, in this book are a number of years of lessons that you can mull over and carefully consider. This is my gift to you. That way, you can “gain an unfair advantage” by borrowing a few years of my own experiences without having to go through them all yourself. While I agree that nothing is a substitute for personal experience, there are still undeniable benefits in reading someone else's notes who are a few steps further along the journey so you can be better prepared for the road ahead.



If you're serious about success, you'll take heed.

But before we begin, can I just say: I'm successful and my company is successful - but I'm not a billion-dollar entrepreneur in silicon valley.

I'm not that guy in a suit, standing next to a 7-figure house or car with slicked-back hair, promising that "I'm here to sell you my secrets."

I DID NOT write this book as a "you can do it too – follow my method" book. I'm being totally upfront right now. Sure, I've done well but I'm more the realistic success trajectory and not the "I earned billions at aged 23. Now I'm writing a book to show you how I did it so you can get rich too." No no no.

There are plenty of those books out there, and this is not that.

This book is for you to read, take in the ups and the downs and think: "what can I do better now that Chris has given me the benefit of foresight for my own journey?"

I'm not going to waffle on either. There are enough books that drag on and on... as an entrepreneur, you need all the precious time you can get so, let's make this a short and snappy book.

Ok, ready to go? Let's begin.



Insight 1:

It all starts with passion

Starting and maintaining a business of any kind takes a lot of work.

Like, a LOT of work. Hours, days, months, weekends, birthdays, public holidays (what are those?!), and more. It's nothing like a 9 to 5 job and if you think you can run it like a normal salary job where you work for someone else, you're wrong.

Let's be clear right from the start.

It's just not the same thing as when you're employed. Get it out of your head now so it's less of a shock later.

You can decree and swear black and blue that you'll set boundaries. I've heard so many of my colleagues promise themselves this. They set an oath that it will be like any other job they've had. But, I'll be honest – it's extremely rare.

Why? Because while you can say to yourself, "I don't work after 5pm", the story changes when your business' survival hangs in the balance, or a client is unhappy or an employee hasn't completed the project satisfactorily and it's due tomorrow. Of course, it's not always negative reasons why you break those boundaries. For me, for instance, I love achievement and find so much satisfaction from completing projects; so working longer hours is actually very fulfilling for me. I enjoy working extra hours because it gives me so much purpose and genuine happiness.

The point of this first part is, a business is hungry for your time. Starving actually.

Don't be like that pregnant couple in denial, trying to convince themselves and everyone around them that their life won't change after their child is born. It's going to happen!



Ok, so there are a lot of hours.

With this in mind, you're going to need a lot of passion to maintain that internal drive to keep you going. Those hours don't just come willingly. Every hour you invest in your business is an hour you're not putting elsewhere, and this can lead to envy over free time, leisure and procrastination. There's an opportunity cost with every minute.

While work/life balance is important, there are going to be times when you know you have to work on a business project but you feel like you'd rather watch videos or scroll through your socials. This is hard to overcome at times.

So, you need a fiery conviction for what you are doing, where you're headed and why you're doing it. Without this, it's going to be a tough slog to get yourself motivated when you need to be.

There are so many people out there who want to have a business but just don't want it enough. They lack the drive to give a business the days and concentration it truly needs.

The money reason alone just won't sustain you.

Yes, this is going to sound so cliché, but “the money” shouldn't be your only reason behind your motivation. While money does lie at the core of your business and is the language of the corporate world, it should not be the only driving force for you.

As humans, it's just not sustaining enough.

I know you're probably thinking, “but that's why we're in business. What else there if it's not for money?” Sure – it is. But income is only a by-product of your success. If you're only here for the money, I feel sorry for you because it's going to be a very excruciating journey.



Every day, you're going to have to trudge through long hours and exhausting effort just to make a monetary quota. Why? Because you're in it for the dollars and when your venture doesn't give back as much as you were expecting, it will deprive you of that rewarding feeling and very quickly sap your enthusiasm.

Being in it only for the money is unsustainable on a human level.

It's because our brains are programmed to find reward in deeper meaning as opposed to a material creation of society - i.e.: money.

Can I clarify here – I'm not taking a “hippy zen” path here.

Money is great!

We all want money as it solves a lot of problems. It gives freedom and opportunity. Absolutely!

But if that's your only motivation, can I tell you what will probably happen? Everything will start to bother you because you're slogging away doing things you really don't care about. This will show through your work. Worse is that you'll constantly wonder if you're getting paid enough to compensate you for it, and that's even more crushing. Then, someone with the passion for it will enter the market doing what you're doing, but because every task makes them happy, they'll quickly overtake you. They'll also be more fulfilled doing it too, keeping them in the game for much longer than you can last.

You see, when you're passionate about something, you can easily find the deep motivation a business really needs to take off. Those endless hours just don't feel as cumbersome. Also, when you're passionate about your industry, you love learning more, growing, evolving and helping your customers. This elevates your business even further. That's why a passionate person overtakes a non-passionate person in a race – because their heart's truly in it.



Here's an example of money versus passion.

I was listening to a business podcast that I love. Many years ago, one of the presenters said that he noticed a gap in the market in Poker tutorials – the card game.

Realising this, he believed that he could make some money here by filling this gap because it was untapped and he had the digital marketing expertise to take that space. This was despite not knowing how to play Poker or even the slightest care for the game. He was convinced that all he needed was a bit of research and he could make it work.



The funny thing was – it did work. For a short time, anyway. While he cared very little for the work, the project or his audience, he was starting to see results, despite it being something that he really didn't care much about. Then, what happened? People who were actually passionate about Poker noticed the gap too because he was filling it, however his work was mediocre. So, they came in and, as they were obsessed with the game and knew it back to front in a way he couldn't match, they took the top spots out from under him and he ended up abandoning it. Their passion allowed them to expand and increase their customer value which left the original business for dead.

I believe the same presenter did the same with skin acne and the result was the same.

He admits it was a hard lesson to learn, but a powerful lesson, nonetheless.

My point here is that, in my opinion and from my experience, passion comes first and the money will come along for the ride. It's much harder the other way around.

Passion, you say?

Now you're thinking: "but I'm not passionate about my 9-to-5 job, but I do ok in it. I still show up every day. That works. Why wouldn't it be the same in my own business?"

Yes true, but that's a false equivalence as we're not talking about a regular job here. When you have your own business and the buck starts and stops entirely with you, you need unshakable passion to fire you to keep going, despite all odds.

You see, in your normal job where you work for someone else, your stakes aren't as high. You go to work, you do your tasks and you leave. Sure, there are things to do and you have certain responsibilities. But in the end, you're still an employee. However, when it's your own business, it's different. You've probably heard people liken the entrepreneurial journey to a rollercoaster – and it's true. There are highs and there are lows, and you have to wear them both. That means there are going to be times when passion is the only fuel you have and you need it in spades if you want to continue.

Passion motivates you to take risks and push through late nights.

Passion inspires you against procrastination and frustration.

And passion makes the wins all that more rewarding.

But some people are less passionate than others naturally, right?

Absolutely!

If you've seen any of my videos or come to some of my classes, you'll instantly recognise the enthusiasm I have for what I do. This is a good thing! But I've heard people say, "Chris, I'll never be as passionate as you, ever, as it's not in my nature." Yep, I get this – I'm pretty full-on.



But that doesn't matter, so long as you have a passion for what you're doing, that's enough to keep you going. That's because passion equals lasting power and businesses need that. The book, *The Infinite Game* by the amazing Simon Sinek, explains this concept well. As the title suggests, Sinek likens a business to being involved in a game that doesn't end, and this infinite play means that leaders have to embrace longevity. It's so true. In the commercial space, there are not so much winners and losers, but rather players who simply drop out when they run out of the will, the desire, and/or the resources to continue on. For this, you need passion.

You may not be dancing on the tables, screaming at the top of your lungs, "I love what I do!!!!" Gosh, I hope not! But if you can be honest with yourself and know that you've got enough of what it takes to push ahead and make a difference, then you're good.

I married one of the most introverted people in the world and there's no way he ever gets as passionate as me about anything. However, he still lights up when he is doing something he loves, like spreadsheets, gardening or mechanical projects. That's exactly what you need – to feel "lit up" by what your business is doing.

This passion will lay a strong foundation during both the great and the tough times. I know my passion has got me through so much when others would have long given up. You'll need this too.

So – ask yourself.

Do I truly have the passion to see this through?

Will you perhaps discover the passion for it very soon?

Keep this in mind if you want to be able to keep going, even during the tough times and really enjoy the journey. Passion will take you far and it needs to be genuine.



Insight 2:

You also have to be hungry

Moving on from passion - its cousin is what they call “hunger”.

There are going to be so many times along the business journey when you’ll be faced with an insurmountable challenge and you need to move heaven and earth to find a solution. Hunger is what makes the impossible, possible.

I can’t stress this enough. Hunger is the tenacity to find a way when everyone else (including yourself) thinks something is insurmountable; and there will be a lot of these so-called insurmountable challenges along the way.

Be hungry as an entrepreneur. Or you’ll starve as one.

So the reality is, your success requires constant attention and the moment you stop hunting for it, it will escape you. You must approach the creation of success as a must-have obligation, a do-or-die mission where you just have-to-have-it. This hunger is a great metric to test how much effort you’re willing to invest in your endeavour – financially, as well as your time and energy. The reason why I put it after passion is that hunger is more compelling than passion – it has a sense of urgency that passion often lacks.

Think about it. You’re probably passionate about many things, such as a particular hobby. But it sometimes doesn’t click over into launching a business venture because it lacks pure drive. Drive emanates from something deeper and it compels you to act. Hunger is the difference between someone who loves to teach dance and someone making money running a dancing school business, trying to find bigger and better ways to make hers the only choice for students.

Hunger motivates change, provides initiative and inspires creativity.



This ‘business hunger’ is hard to explain.

Why? Because it often doesn't need to trigger in a normal 9-5 job as you have teams of people around to work on it. There's often a manual or standard operating procedure to find a way around and so, that instinct remains dormant.

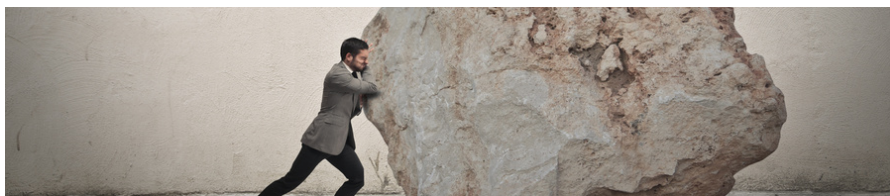
But this rarely happens when you have your own business. Something will come up or you're facing impossible odds. When you're hungry, you just find a way, no matter what. The best example is when COVID-19 first hit in early 2020. It was an unprecedented time and shook up every industry as brands and companies scrambled to find a way to survive. The ones that did had hunger. The ones that sat back and say, “oh, everyone's in the same leaky boat, so we can all drown together” – didn't have hunger.

A close friend of mine owns a dance studio, and the minute her in-person classes were shut down, she immediately started teaching on Zoom and changed her style. She was one of the first and she educated her clients about how she would continue teaching. Her proactivity made it a success for her and, while others eventually moved to this system months after, she had some of her biggest revenue months ever.

She was hungry and she made it work, despite all odds.

Yes, looking back, Zoom was the obvious move. But remember you're looking at this through retrospect. Now, everything is online in this way due to COVID, but back when she did it, everyone was scrambling for a plan b.

This is what I'm talking about. I know you're thinking, “well, who knows if I have hunger or not?” No worries, let me explain it more so you can understand.



Hunger is your driving force to keep you moving forward.

I attended a real estate agent training seminar a few years ago and the first thing the speaker said was: “hunger trumps experience and expertise any day. I would only hire agents with hunger.”

I remember thinking, that doesn't seem right. I mean, how can someone with years of experience and a set of hard-earned skills struggle to keep up with something who had a real drive?! However, I have since seen this is definitely true. And if you have hunger plus experience and expertise, well then you're absolutely unstoppable!

So, why is hunger so important?

Because there are so many obstacles when you're an entrepreneur.

You're embarking on completely uncharted territory most of the time - whether that's for you personally or for the industry. You need to want it so much that you're willing to go the extra mile to get there, despite everything. Unfortunately, when you aren't hungry, you're happy to just give in whenever things seem too hard.

Think of that example with the real estate agents. You have someone who is young but hungry – let's call her Kayla. Then you have the real estate agent who has been doing it for years – let's call him Steve. Steve's got a solid reputation, so he is happy to let his work speak for itself (and sure, it does). He pitches his services to a new client in the same way he always does, confident that he will win by default. Then, Kayla speaks to this client and her enthusiasm and energy spark the interest of the client. They throw question after question at her, and she impresses them every time. Then, when selling the home, she makes it happen by calling around and doing whatever she needs to get results. On the other hand, Steve would just do the same process every time – why would he change? It works!



There's the problem.

Hunger makes you innovative and exploratory – two traits that you need to succeed with your own business. But they're two traits that are hard to manifest. They're triggered by a real drive to reach a goal, and if you have that, you're going to go further.

Some examples of when you need hunger.

Let me try and explain this with a few examples, so you can see what I mean.

This list is not exhaustive, as everyone will face their own set of difficulties along the road. But this should give you a taste for hunger!

- *Your dream client has come to you and asked for a proposal by tomorrow.*
- *A competitor that is three times your size is up for the same tender as you.*
- *Your best employee decides to leave and you already booked months of work.*
- *You have a team of 5 people who cost you \$50,000 a month and your sales are dropping rapidly, risking your ability to pay them.*
- *A social media platform changes its rules which threatens your entire sales funnel.*



In each of these instances, would you have the passion and hunger to fight these head-on and win? Or would you shrug and say, “well, this one has got us. Let’s pack up”?

No one wants to be in these situations, but they’re going to happen at some point. You just need the conviction to say: “ok, this is a hard one, but here’s what we’re going to do.” It won’t always work, but anything is better than admitting defeat, especially in business.

So – ask yourself.

Could I be driven enough to find a way around a big problem?

Do I have a level of determination that will motivate me to withstand anything in my way?

Have I got the persistence to fight, be innovative and try something new?

Will I know when to lead when times get tough and everyone’s looking to me?

Keep all of your answers in mind when you need to win, no matter the cost. Because the cost could be your business. A burning hunger will get you far.



Insight 3:

Nothing is perfect – just start

This one is not new but it's still one that certainly bears repeating.

You're never going to be truly ready. But that should never be an excuse that stops you from taking the next step. There's never a utopic moment – ever.

It's like that saying: the best time to start was yesterday, but if you didn't, then the second best is today. That really is the truth. While it's important to prepare everything as much as you can so you can launch, there is a difference between feeling adequately confident and feeling paranoid. You see, when you're launching a business, there are no rules or guides to tell you what to do most of the time.

When you're making your own path, you want to work on all the elements so that you can trade and do all the basics, but you don't want to hold yourself back from launching simply because it's not "perfect".

Learning along the way is normal.

In an interview, Kevin Systrom, the founder and creator of Instagram, said that so many start-ups get consumed and overwhelmed at the early stages, stressing about how to accommodate 50,000 users down the track. You may be doing something similar based on your own business, such as how will you fulfil orders when it grows country-wide, for instance.

His advice was, by the time you get to that point in time, you'll be thankful for that issue and you can hire a smart person to solve it. His story on the creation of Instagram embodies this chapter's point – building something new means you're going to make mistakes. Nothing is perfect and you'll learn along the way.



Systrom said it's all about finding the right product-market fit as a priority. Everything else comes from this. What he means is, find something that's in demand (or potentially in demand) and the rest will come from this.

The point is, don't sweat all the "possible future problems". Just start.

So, when?

I teach a lot of "How To Start A Business" courses online and when I get asked this question, I say: launch when what you're promising your customers will meet their expectations, not yours.

Please don't think I'm saying you shouldn't reach for the stars, but so long as your new product or service, musical or play, restaurant menu, video game, painting or invention is not going to disappoint your audience, then you're ready to launch. You can work on the rest and learn more about how to improve later.

For instance, at the time of writing this, my team at Melotti Media has almost finished preparing our online training platform, Melotti Media Campus. We've got a set date for launch and we're sticking to it. Right now, it features about half of the content I would like on there, but I'm not delaying the launch for that because people who enrol and browse our content will not be disappointed in what they find. There's still enough on there for them to enjoy and find it worth their while.

Sure, it's not fully complete, but it will be by the end of the year, and that gap is not going to detract from any user's experience right now. If anything, by adding more content over the next few months, it will give them more reasons to come back!

My point is, it's never perfect. If you're not going to hurt, upset or let down customers with your launch, you're good to go.



A car brand shouldn't release a model when the engine is not functioning or is dangerous. But should launch when the expected purchaser drives it and finds it valuable.

Sure, there's a tonne of extra features and a better engine that can come, but if you're always aiming for perfect, you (and your customers) will be waiting a long time – and in that time, they may lose interest or you may miss your window of opportunity because a competitor beats you to it.

But what about having pride in your business?

Of course! This is not a question of thinking you're slacking off or being lazy because "that'll do."

I'm not suggesting you compromise your own judgement. You want to be proud of your work and comfortable with what's in the public space. This chapter is trying to help you, as a budding entrepreneur, to realise that nothing hits nirvana, especially the first time. Your coffee shop would be great if you could afford those better leather chairs – absolutely. But you shouldn't stay closed until you can buy them. Your current chairs will do for now. Do you see what I mean?

I get it – your business is like your baby. You want it to be perfect because you want it to be loved. You want everyone to adore it and never find any problems. Believe me, I understand more than you know. But the world doesn't work in absolutes today, especially given today's era of instant gratification. Don't let "but there's still more I could do" hold you back.

That brings me to my next point.



Yep, it's hard to decide where preparation finishes and perfectionism begins.

Where that line is, I can't tell you.

It's a personal thing. However, what I can tell you is that if you're holding yourself back from taking a step forward, simply because you want to revise and revise it again, and then change it so you can revise again, then you have to ask yourself why.

A good rule of thumb is: if your idea keeps growing and growing and growing, then you're holding yourself back.

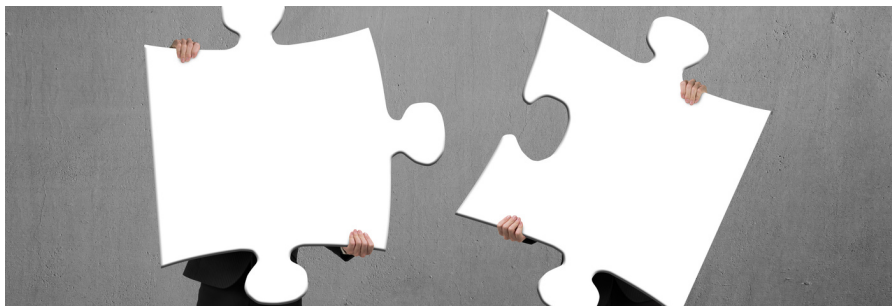
While it's great to get excited and have so many ideas, if the horizons keep expanding, you're going to find there's a lack of focus. Next, you get overwhelmed and finally, you simply ditch the whole project because it seems far too ginormous to even try.

Think of every idea that has been ever executed.

A TV show concept, an advert, a new mobile app or a wearable device. They all had to start somewhere, and they were all very far from perfect. However, it's only by launching and experimenting that you can learn, adapt and grow.

That's the same for your business.

While you want to do sufficient preparation before you enter the public arena, know that there's no such thing as "perfect". What does the perfect business look like? It doesn't exist, so don't aim for that.



So – ask yourself.

Can I be satisfied with not trying to be the perfect solution for everyone?

Do I have the ability to compromise with my expectations so long as I can meet my customers?

Does my idea keep changing and growing until the sheer thought is daunting?

Will I be able to determine if I'm obsessing over the details and losing sight of the bigger picture?

Do I have the courage to launch when I know I've hit the right threshold?

It's all about knowing your boundaries and being able to look at the bigger picture. When you're launching a business, a product, a brand or a service, it's crucial to not lose sight of who it's for and the expectations they have for it.

Don't hold yourself back from getting out there.



Insight 4:

Don't compare yourself to other businesses

This is a big one that I often found myself doing. A lot.

I looked at my competitors who were decades ahead of me and thought: I'm so inadequate, I'm never going to be where they are and shouldn't even try.

Stop. Just stop. You're always going to compare and feel bad - but stop.

The problem with comparing your business to theirs is: when you see their business, you're on the outside looking in. For your business, you're on the inside, looking out. The grass always appears greener, but everyone's path is different.

Everyone's path is different?

Yep. What I mean by that is, with business, it's a journey of choices, decisions, actions and luck. You can try and replicate someone else's success, but you'll never have the same opportunities or costs as them, nor the same strengths and weaknesses. You'll never be in the same situation or meet the same people – for better or for worse. So, looking at them and thinking “why aren't I there?” is a redundant question.

Look – it's going to happen. I've seen entrepreneurs half my age become multimillionaires and I think, “wow, how are they doing it so right?” People like Fred Schebesta – the Co-Founder of Finder.com, which made him a very successful and wealthy businessman.



However, then I remember that my life has literally nothing in common with his. Sure, as entrepreneurs, we both want to make sure we're making financially savvy and rewarding decisions, but what got us where we both find ourselves today is so different. So, expecting me to be in the same circumstance "just because" is silly. And what about if someone like Schebesta was in a worse position than me – does the reverse work? Should I be saying "wow, I should be like him." Of course not.

It's important to remember that when starting your business.

Also remember that, when you're seeing their success, it's that whole tip of the iceberg concept.

In an interview on the radio, Schebesta mentioned that he launched 16 previous business websites before he landed the winning one – yes sixteen! He also said that he remembered walking up and door-knocking people with holes in his shoes and socks wet from the rain. So, he deserves his success.

I can honestly say, making peace with the difference between everyone has made me a happier entrepreneur – and that's why this is in this book for you to learn too.

In saying that, there are, of course, still valuable lessons to be learned from looking at others too. Let me explain.

Envy and jealousy have their uses (to an extent).

Now, what I will admit to is - definitely use competitors and enviable people as motivation fuel.

Seeing Schebesta's accomplishments and reading his book was a great inspiration for me to push harder. Me seeing my competitors made me excited, passionate and hungry to achieve what they did, but much faster and much better. This helped me a lot! But this approach is very different from looking at the success that they'd achieved 10 years before me and saying: why can't I be there today?



That's a very 'instant-gratification' mentality and if you're serious about having a successful business, you need to learn to avoid this type of thinking. Magic doesn't happen overnight.

Direct comparisons on a vastly unfair playing field like that are only going to make you feel exhausted. If you sit there and see their 40-page website, polished branding and excellent social media following, and then turn to your own start-up and feel inferior, that's only natural. But don't think: well, I'm doomed. Instead, think: how can I be inspired and put my own spin on this journey?

A little bit of 'healthy jealousy' can be good. Use their success to inspire you to be better. Not the same, but better!

Be proud of the difference.

Another advantage of not directly comparing yourself to others is that it gives you the freedom to be unique and of course, innovative in your own way. You see, if you are a new café on a street and you find yourself obsessively spiteful of the bigger café across the road, you may be tempted to simply copy them.

They put out a chalkboard. So you do. They try a new dessert. So you do. The thing is, if they're already years ahead of you, it may seem like everything just works for them and never ever works for you. Instead, like I said above – be inspired by their success and notice that they try new things. It's their creativity and freshness that is what's getting them ahead. So, instead of copying and becoming frustrated, you may put out a new, classy street-side seating area that offers a Paris-style café experience. Suddenly, you're different for the right reasons and your customers respond favourably because it's fresh. Suddenly, the other café is wondering why they didn't think of that!

Again, don't compare in a way that's unjustified. That's unproductive. Remember your different and different can be great.



Everyone was at that point at some point.

Just remember, the people and businesses you're admiring now were exactly where you are at some point in their history. They too saw a crowded market full of other businesses and entered the fray, frightened and feeling inadequate. But they took their own path and you definitely can too. The best part is, if you stick it out long enough, you'll probably look back at these competitors soon and find yourself feeling pretty proud of all the work you've done.

I did! It felt great.

You may even find that soon, they'll admire and copy you!

There's nothing more humbling and surprising when that brand you've spent so long looking up to starts asking you for tips or tries to follow your lead.

So – ask yourself.

Do I understand that direct comparisons to other businesses is pointless?

Am I ok with knowing everyone's path is different?

Will I not incessantly compare myself to my competitors and consequently hold myself back?

Can I see the difference between healthy inspiration and limiting longing for another person's success?

Overcoming the need to get trapped in jealousy is an important part of setting yourself up to succeed along your own path. There will always be people and businesses that are better and worse than you. Good for them – you do you and be happy when you make your own progress.



Insight 5:

Where you end up probably won't be where you thought you would

Businesses evolve over time.

You can plan and plan, but you'll soon find that after you enter the turbulent waters that is the public market, where you end up heading is very different to where you were initially thinking.

Don't be afraid of this. A lot of the time, it's for the best.

The sooner you accept this, the better.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't have conviction about your direction or that you shouldn't plan. Of course, you want to do this with your business. But thinking that a ship won't get tossed around by the waves and currents while on its trajectory is foolish. Sometimes those currents actually lead a ship to spot uncharted territories that inspire a better direction entirely.



That all sounds a bit scary!

Oh, believe me – I understand.

However, as promised, I'm trying to prepare you for the inevitable. The reason why this can make you nervous is because your mind is a very "controlled environment". You think, if I do A, then B will happen which will lead to C, then I do D. However, what really ends up happening is, you do A, but F, Y and X happen, which you never saw coming. So, you regroup and realise your original D doesn't work, so you try E and that leads to R... and you get my point.

Here's my example.

I set out to be a solo freelance copywriter like everyone else in my field. Despite my marketing background and the natural gravitation to Marketing Consultant work, I wanted to put things into words because I felt it was more of an executable outcome for clients than consulting. I launched years ago and, along the course, I found that more and more clients kept asking me to add my marketing strategy ideas to their copywriting projects.

Suddenly, I became known as the Marketing copywriter because clients could come to me, not with a fully specced writing brief, but with a genuine business problem that I would help them solve with content.

As a result, today, I now run a Message Marketing Agency that specialises in Marketing and Creative strategy to help businesses define who they are through words. It's still in the same copywriting vein, but I'm vastly unique to all other copywriters – something that I'm very thankful for and something that allows me to operate very differently from other people in my industry. I'm able to charge more because I offer far more value, I'm sought after by brands and have a growing team.

See what I mean? I never thought I'd be here. It was impossible to predict. However, the sooner I accepted I needed to adapt and look for opportunities to open my mind, the better.

You can do this too.



You'll end up where you weren't expecting – and that's ok (within reason).

So that's the lesson I want to pass on here.

Know that, while you should always have a direction in mind and it's always important to stick to your passion and purpose, know that once you launch, you're going to feel the pressure to adapt and you're going to see unpredicted opportunities you can take up. This will steer you in different courses.

Just stick to your strengths while allowing yourself to be agile and you'll be on the right track.

A little trick I use.

If you're still worried about not being able to plan everything out so precisely, try this little trick I have used for years.

Picture yourself 5, 10 or even 20 years into the future. Now imagine yourself looking up your own company's Wikipedia page.

What does it say there? What can you imagine?

I would think, "Melotti Media: What started as Christopher at home, checking his emails and tinkering away on Microsoft Word has become a full, creative marketing and strategy bureau" – and so on. Let your imagination run wild. This will expand your horizon of thinking about the possibilities and how proud you will be. This helps ease the fear of the unknown and instead, will excite you for what could be ahead.



But remember – don't spread yourself too thin.

When I say you'll be in a different place, I mean the course you set won't be a straight one. That's because there will be so many forces at play around you, all of which you need to navigate around. Your business will inevitably look different to what you're expecting when you start off.

But don't just yes to everything as you'll end up in too many places you didn't expect! That's not what you want. Use your judgement and re-read your vision over and over to ensure that you're always staying true to what you do best.

So – ask yourself.

Do I have a directional plan on where I want to be in the future?

Am I ok knowing that things will evolve along my journey?

Will I be able to spot the opportunities and act on them?

Am I ok with adapting to change?

Being able to accept the uncertainty along the unknown road ahead means you are better prepared for what may be to come. While no one can predict the future, assuming you'll be exactly where you pictured yourself to be is probably not going to happen.

Instead, keep true to your goals and your vision for your business and be prepared to accept that the entrepreneurial journey is hardly ever straight – and that's perfectly ok.



Insight 6:

Failure is just a part of it

Sigh. Yes. You read that title right.

You've probably heard this before but people don't say it for no reason. As painful and as scary as the word "failure" is, it's when things don't go to plan that you learn and grow the most.

There are two main attributes to failure:

- 1. the first is, it sucks at the time, and**
- 2. two, it's a natural part of the journey that you'll be thankful for later.**

Let's discuss this a bit more.

So, as I've made very clear by now, your entrepreneurial journey is very uncharted territory. This means you're going to make mistakes and fall short of achieving your goals for whatever reason. While this certainly stings at first, know that this is just as much a part of learning and growing as anything else – in fact, it's probably more so.

The first tender you fail. You learn what not to do next time.

When you underestimate a job. You'll explore quoting and resourcing more accurately in future.

You select the wrong employee to hire. You will take more care with interviews going forward.

While no one sets out to fail, it's bound to happen due to the nature of experimentation your business will require. You explore your products and services – sometimes it works and you think "wow, amazing. Next?", while other times, you hit a stumbling block or lose money.



That's when you'll probably swear, get frustrated and wonder why you're even bothering.

This is the lesson here.

Be prepared to accept failure.

Every single entrepreneur says the same thing – some even get excited by it.

Rock bottom is the bedrock of foundation that you create a sturdy foundation from and build an empire.

Before I had this business, I wanted to be a professional singer-songwriter. I dedicated years to it, put out songs and even got signed to a label. But I ended up making several silly decisions, the label was beyond horrible, I signed bad contracts and it was just a disaster. It cost me years and lots of money. Even today, I'm so incredibly embarrassed when I hear my songs and when people ask me about them. But then, if I hadn't have gone through it, I wouldn't have learned what I needed to learn about resilience and that business transactions can be unfair if I'm not careful.

From this failure, I learned to trust my instincts, think things through first and make smarter decisions. I am also more sceptical about situations that sound too good to be true. This all set the groundwork for who I am today – and for this, I'm thankful. Terrible at the time, but necessary and thankful today.

The true sign of a successful entrepreneur is one who accepts failure as a bump to correct their trajectory. Failure is just that necessary evil that we need to deal with, endure through and learn from. Did you read that sentence carefully? Deal with, endure through and learn from. That's the attitude you need to have when you face each failure. Resilience is key because, like hunger and passion in earlier chapters, you need these attributes to face everything and be able to move on.



Let's not mince words here. Failure hurts.

Before you think I'm brushing it off! No one likes painful situations. Humans crave comfort, routine and normalcy. Failure is anything but.

There's nothing worse than disappointing a client, making the wrong business decision, buying the wrong App, hiring the wrong people... I've been there so many times before. I'm human and can't get it right every time.

But it's all about your attitude after it happens.

Are you going to feel frustrated and give up? Or are you going to take the better option of asking yourself, why did that happen? And how can I learn from this?

Don't be angry at your failures. Be angry if you don't learn from them.

Yes, yes, I'm citing the whole: shame on you if you fool me once, shame on me if you fool me twice. But that's honestly the truth. Here's an example.

I hired someone that I was concerned about being a poor culture fit inside my business. However, it was earlier on in my business journey and I just hired them thinking it would all pan out. I didn't listen to my instincts and then, as predicted, it was a messy disaster. Yep, it really hurt, but I didn't just swear off hiring more people. Quite the contrary – I asked myself what I would do better next time, after having this experience. So, fast forward a few years and many successful hires later, I found myself once again presented with the same scenario. I remembered the signs and turned the application down - and I'm so glad I did, as now that I have a bigger team, the culture damage would have been worse this time around.

Failure is like earning experience points in a game, and often your successes are built upon learnings from the past, just like in my case.



Let yourself have the room to fail.

Don't feel embarrassed and, better still, don't let anyone make you feel embarrassed. You're going to have family and friends judge your actions and they just don't understand what it's like.

For instance, I've had people chuckle at my failed music career many times. "Whatever happened to those songs? Did they go anywhere?" they said under breathy laughs. I just smile and laugh it off too, but where they see that experience as a dead end, I see it as an essential part of my journey of development. It was an opportunity that I needed to go through. Humans are hardwired to avoid failure and pain, so to others, it can seem counterproductive. But remember, you're an entrepreneur treading paths that no one else has (or dares) to tread – so you're going to hit a few bumps along the way.

It often stems from jealousy, too. Many people who don't have the drive for business ownership and entrepreneurship often subconsciously are happier when you don't succeed, and so failures are a nice justification for their own inaction. However, they'll be your biggest fan if you succeed!

Just remember that it's not just others you have to be mindful of when it comes to regret over failure. It's yourself and your inner voice too. Keep reminding yourself that, while success is what we're aiming for, there are inevitably going to be failures along the way.

Learn from each and move right on.



So – ask yourself.

Are you prepared that failures are going to be part of your business journey?

Will you be able to endure and move on?

Do you have the courage to be brave knowing that things won't always go your way?

Are you ready to learn from your mistakes?

Just to balance things out there: you will have your successes too, of course! There will be plenty to celebrate and lots to enjoy about your business. It's just that failures happen because you're on your own unique road that hasn't been travelled before – this means that there often isn't a clearly marked map and things will sometimes not go to plan.

I'm just preparing you to see them not as total losses, but learning experiences to embrace for the good of your future.



Insight 7:

Seek a Coach or Mentor

This is a biggy! If you take only one thing from this book, take this one (although I hope you take much more than this): get a professional Business Coach or Mentor.

Investing in a Business Coach means investing in both you and the business.

You don't need to do this straight away perhaps, but there should be a point where you decide that you've hit a bit of a plateau and it's time to seek help from someone who has done this before as they can spot the weaknesses, opportunities and threats and help you take more guided action. Having a Coach is an honour because, if you're at the point where you need to get some "surgical strike support", they're who you need to turn to.

I get it. A lot of people are sceptical about Coaches because some people call themselves that and have no qualifications or experience to back that up. However, they're not all the same. There are better Coaches and then there are some that are better suited to certain people than others. However, when you find the right Coach at the right time, you'll thank yourself for bringing them onboard. I'll explain what I mean.

What is a Professional Coach?

A Coach is a person who asks you about your challenges and motivates you to find your own solutions to them, through their experience, guidance and support. But what are they really? An experienced, external voice – and that's exactly what you need if you truly want to get to the next level.

The reality is, you can actually solve a lot of your own problems yourself - however, the challenge is, you don't think about it. You don't know what you don't know.

For instance, if you're struggling to grow, you get that you need more customers – however, you may find yourself out of ideas about how. Or, you know your sales process is effective but you don't know how effective or if there is more you could do to improve it. What about thinking about where your business will be in ten years and how you're going to capitalise on the latest tech to adapt to marketplace innovation. It's very hard when your head is in the game to tilt your chin back and look forward. But you need to.

That's why you need someone there, actively listening, asking you questions and guiding you towards opening up your own mind.

Real examples of good Coaches and their benefits.

I have had two Coaches.

One was a Leadership Coach. She was brilliant and helped me more with entrepreneurial attitude, mental health and emotional resilience. Her name was Claire and she was able to support me in managing my boundaries, work/life balance and avoiding burnout.

This was a great experience for me as, like most other entrepreneurs, you get so caught up in the business that you forget yourself.

As a result, my emotions were wearing thin and my mental health was suffering. Claire took an active role in helping me reconnect with my goals and values so I could put things back into perspective. It was what I needed right then and she prevented me from imploding from people-pleasing.



As for my second Coach, his name was Stephen. He was different to Claire in that he was a Business Coach, focused more on improving my business' functionality and systems. Stephen worked with me to look at my operational process, from marketing and sales, to quoting, team productivity and revenue-generating capabilities. Through his guidance, we were able to clearly break down the growth and profitability potential of my business and implement effective ways to get there. These are business objectives I wanted, that I knew I probably would have eventually achieved, but I would be stumbling through it to get there. While that's ok to an extent, eventually, you want a guide who can break it down for you and show you how to break it down from a functional perspective so you have clearer ways to achieve success.

What is a Professional Mentor?

A Mentor, on the other hand, can be referred to as a professional consultant. Unlike a Coach, this person is usually industry-specific and offers you strategies to your challenges based on their own direct experiences. For example, a HR Mentor showing a HR entrepreneur how to undertake certain tasks. Think of them as more of a trainer. Since a Mentor has a shared understanding of what you're going through, they can ask you more leading questions and provide you with answers.

You can decide which you want or prefer – but definitely consider at least one.

A Coach can be a worthwhile investment when you're ready.

The entrepreneurial journey is a very lonely one. It's also scary and unpredictable. I heard an analogy where, starting a business is like throwing yourself off a cliff and constructing a plane on the way down. Having someone who has done this all before and who can provide that boost of support is truly invaluable. I wish I had have found one sooner.



A Coach or a Mentor is like this book, but in person. They should offer a two-way conversation, a sounding board and someone who you can go to, to ask for advice. Like I said, Claire helped me deal with the anxiety I was facing constantly trying to please people. I was running myself into the ground at all hours of the day to make every client happy – a noble endeavour to be sure – however, I was killing myself in the meantime and it was unsustainable. But by the time I realised, the behaviour was so ingrained that I couldn't change it. She helped me reframe my understanding of myself and my business into a much healthier area and now, I couldn't be happier.

Find a Coach or Mentor who will be able to be there to protect your sanity and mental health.

Choose the right person.

But, this comes with a word of warning. There are Mentors and Coaches, and then there are good Mentors and Coaches. Take the time to interview and screen them before you pick. Some, you'll have to pay while others will be friends and willing to share their time – regardless, make sure you take the time to pick the right one that fits with you. Of course, it should go without saying that, when you know you've got the right person, listen and implement their advice.

The best part is, you can also challenge, discuss and even debate. That's the point! You can say, "I'm having this problem", then they come back with something and you can just talk it through. Some of the best ideas of mine came from a Coach saying something like, "what would this problem look like if you had more staff?" or "do you think technology could solve this?"

That "ah-ha!" moment is hard to replicate on your own. Not always, but most times.



So – ask yourself.

Are you open to some external help from someone who can share their experience?

Do you recognise that, while you are your own boss and call the shots, you can't know everything?

In those cases, are you happy to seek the guidance of someone who can help?

Let's be frank here: like I said in Insight 6 – the journey to success comes paved with a lot of times that you'll fail. A quality Coach can help you more directly because chances are, they failed a lot too and you can learn from their failures so you don't have to repeat their mistakes.

For example, if they mention that they were in a similar position where they let internal culture grow into a toxic environment before they acted, you can hear about what signs they missed so that you don't miss them and repeat their same mistake.



Insight 8:

Others just won't fully understand

Right. Let's deal with this now because you're definitely going to face this one way or another.

"Why put yourself through running your own business?"

Heard this yet? If not, it's coming. While most of your friends and family around you generally mean well, non-entrepreneurial people really struggle to understand what having a business is truly like, and it can be infuriating when they pass their own judgement. Not only because they can't appreciate your journey - but because, even close mates and family members will all give you their opinions with very little basis, without you even asking (this is why having an experienced Coach comes in handy). And because they think they're helping, most won't hold back, either.

So, you'll hear it all.

"Why do you spend so many hours doing this?" "Why would you bother?"

"Just tell clients no." "Just stop checking your emails."

"You're the boss. Just take time off whenever you want."

I'm not saying that, as business owners, we are an exclusive club or we are elite or anything like that. It's just, be prepared that you will have those around you who just can't imagine or relate to your situation, and therefore just apply their own life perspective onto yours.



The business-owner journey is unique and uncharted; so, for many, they just can't relate and will often ask you why you're doing it. It's going to happen.

What's the insight here? You have to learn to listen to yourself and not get swayed too much by those who just don't get it.

This is the curse we bear.

We're different to what most people know and as a result, they question it. The annoying part is that most of these people do mean well. Sure, there will be the jealous ones who hope you will fail – outright ignore them as they are out to sabotage you to draw you back to their normal. However, the rest are simply questioning your judgement because – yep – they just don't get it. Even the ones who try still won't get it.

They will find your whole path ridiculous and incessantly say passive-aggressive statements like: "Oh, did you bring your laptop on holidays again? I thought you wanted to be your own boss to have more free time? What's the point?"

You have to fight back the urge to say: "Yes! Of course I did. I brought my laptop. It's what I have to do because the buck starts and stops with me!"

Then they give the default response: "just turn it off".

That's all well and good for them, because their next payday doesn't depend on their next client. Yours does. So, my advice is, just accept this is going to happen and remind yourself they mean well. But don't take it to heart and try not to let your mind say: "maybe they're right?".

Remember: they just don't and can't understand because being an entrepreneur is a completely foreign concept to most people.



I have this kind of friend myself.

While all family and friends have said it to me on occasion, I have one that really has it stuck in his mind. Every joke is about me being a workaholic or throwing around a side comment like, “let me guess – you were working on your computer while sitting by the pool?” Despite me telling him over and over that I actually find a lot of pure enjoyment and genuine happiness from building something of my own, he just can’t understand it. He sees through his myopic ‘life lens’ where work is work and play is play, whereas I don’t – I see that every minute of my day can be enjoyable and nothing requires a ‘work’ vs ‘play’ label. Despite me knowing all of this, there are times where I find myself saying, “maybe he is right?” because his intentions are not malicious. However, I regain my conviction by remembering that I just couldn’t live the way he sees is normal, and that’s ok.

A highly trained medical professional doesn’t listen to a layperson’s opinion and change their diagnosis. They remember their journey, training and situation, and remained focused.

How do I apply this in my business?

Before you think, “wow, is this a business book or a philosophical work?”, let’s bring it back to how you can apply this to your own situation. If you’re a business owner or start-up entrepreneur, people are going to judge you like this and express their opinions about your choices.

There are some coping mechanisms for this that you can try. For example, in balance, just remember that they’re stuck in routine salary jobs working for someone else their whole lives, while you have a way to achieve something you truly want based on your own hard work. You can push boundaries, strive against the norm and make a significant difference. As a business owner, your hard work all pays off for you – everything you achieve is for you rather than someone else. It brings me back to the first two insights from this book: you have passion and hunger and you’re never going to be ok with a 9-5 job. It’s too limiting for your inner ambition.



Also, you can try turning the tables in your mind. Let's face it - you'll probably never understand why those people around you are happy to give their daily potential to someone else. Every day, they slave away for the good of shareholders and managers. They're giving their precious hours, physical strength and mental intellect to someone else.

Just use this as a coping mechanism – don't judge. Because the truth is that it takes all sorts to make the world go around. Neither option is necessarily "correct". You have your path and they have theirs – but just know that they'll be more vocal about judging yours because they're "the norm".

I just hope you have a close friend or partner by your side, like I do in my husband, who can still be your rock. Even if they don't understand, they will always be supportive. You will need this.

So – ask yourself.

Are you ok knowing that not all will agree with your chosen entrepreneurial journey?

Can you withstand their judgement, despite how well-intentioned they are?

Do you have the control to simply ignore it?

Will you have the strength to stick to your convictions?

Can you tell the difference between good advice and general opinions?

This is a hard skill to learn. You may be reading this and think, "I don't care what they say". But think about it more. Imagine when you go through one of the harder times and, believe me, that's when those people will be there saying, "are you sure this is worth it?" It's tempting to agree. It's tempting to get stuck in the spiral of: are they right? You have to be able to differentiate between taking the easy road or knowing that this is the path you chose.

Insight 9:

Your 'gut instinct' is a real thing

You know how you have this inner voice that tells you the truth?

That's your gut instinct and, if you sharpen it and really listen to it, you'll find that it's a very solid voice of reason. Why? Because it's hardwired into your subconscious. Your gut instinct is your intuition, and it isn't filtered by logic or judgement – it just is your immediate response to a given stimulus. It tells your internal truth, which is why it's so powerful. So, I find personally that it tells me what I'm really feeling before I have a chance to overthink and justify.

For example, there have been times when my gut instinct says: this is not the right client for you, danger danger! But then my mind thinks, 'no, it's ok. You'll be fine.' Then, I quickly find that my gut was right – I should have never proceeded.

There has been a tonne of research that suggests that 'gut feel' can be useful, especially in uncertain circumstances where gathering more data to analyse won't sway you one way or another, leaving you stuck.



What does that mean for your business?

Well, I found that it really helped me make better decisions, especially when the road ahead was so uncharted. For instance, if a new opportunity presents itself and you default to thinking it all through, step-by-step, stop and think: what are my instincts telling me?

You'll realise that that gut of yours has so much to offer. But it's not easy to tap into because, as an entrepreneur, your mind is scattered thinking about fifteen different things at once. It's hard to isolate all of those and look inward. But once you do, you'll be able to admit how you really feel about the situation.

Here's an example. I hired a person once that was fantastic in the interview, checked out across all background checks and seemed like the perfect cultural fit. However, a few months in, it became clear that she wasn't right for the role. Nothing problematic but just wasn't settling in well. My gut was telling me to take action, but of course, I was trying to give her the benefit of the doubt. I shifted the role a bit and instructed my team to help her more. We all persisted for many more months until my team were exhausted trying to support her. Finally, I made the decision, and we came to an agreement where she would exit amicably.

We've all been there and I just knew that it was the right thing months before but I tried to overthink and overanalyse until, in the end, my gut instinct was right all along.

We're only human and no one is perfect but just remember to listen to yourself and that inner judgement, especially when you're a few years in and it's drawing from years of experience.

Ok so, let's be clear. Your gut isn't an oracle.

There will be times where your intuition isn't exactly right because it can't predict the future. However, that's not what it's for. Your gut strips back all of your overthinking and gives you how you really feel about something – and you can often find a lot of insight there. So, just check in with your gut and focus on it: what's it telling you?

Is it saying: “caution, this is not worth the risk?” Then, it's probably not worth the risk. If you make a decision about something and you're feeling really satisfied, then trust that. Or if you're feeling uneasy about a new team member or a business partner, then listen to it – because most of the time, it's right. But you have to remember to check in.

So – ask yourself.

Do you overthink things a bit?

If so, can you strip everything back and listen to your inner voice?

Have you got the patience to stop and think: what's my gut telling me?

Would you trust that inner feeling when it's nagging you?

As I said, it's not perfect and your gut won't tell you the future. But when you realise that there's a lot of noise and distractions, especially around your day-to-day operations and never-ending to-do lists, remember to check in with yourself and how you feel, especially around specific decisions. You'll find that, once you listen, you'll be able to draw on that instinct to help you.



Insight 10:

Start your business as a side gig

This insight comes solely from my opinion and not everyone may agree – so here's a forewarning now.

So, my advice based on my experience is: start your business as a side gig while still working for your full-time job (if you have that luxury). It's for the reasons you'd expect – safety and security, especially while in the very vulnerable first years of establishing your business.

But, don't you want to focus entirely on your business?

Yes, you're going to have other entrepreneurs who say that you need to just give everything up and start full-time immediately. Sure, I see the benefits of this, because it forces you to sink or swim and that pressure really kicks you into gear. I get why some may recommend this course, as you can dedicate your whole focus to it. If you need that fear to drive yourself forward, then go for it. However, know that everything is on the line there and you're going to feel it. It's a huge risk for a (hopefully) big return and will potentially get you ahead faster. But not everyone likes this pressure and/or can't afford to take that risk.

I have seen people do this and, while this 100% focus seems good in theory, most are so stressed and worried about their financial well-being during this time that they lose focus instead and it ends up being counterproductive, especially if this is your very first business too!



The alternative: the side-hustle start-up.

I took the safer path as it allowed me the space and time to experiment, grow and evolve my fledgling business before I took it full-time.

For me, I was working in corporate marketing when I started my business on the side. Granted, I had the motivation to really get it moving and this allowed me to build it, completely risk-free because I had a full-time income to support me. For some, I'm sure this could make them procrastinate, as the "I'll get to it" safety net is there. Of course, that is the risk with this approach. However, I now teach many business start-up classes, and from what I've witnessed firsthand, this method seems to see the most success.

The reason why I suggest this side-hustle approach is because it means you've at least got some time to build the foundations before you jump in full-time. The only condition is to make sure you give yourself a date that you're going to take the plunge. There's no point in doing it as a side-gig forever as it's going to absolutely exhaust you.



I almost become a victim of this.

I nearly didn't jump fast enough, despite knowing it was time. The business was up and running and everything was ready – but I was scared of making the final plunge. I remember some of my colleagues saying, "Chris, some business owners don't make a profit for years. Your side-hustle is already making money and you're working all day here and all night on the business! You'd be crazy not to go for it!"

Honestly speaking, when it got to this point of launching, I was truly worried.

But when I did, I never looked back and I was very thankful I did it this way. It meant that I had a strong start – yes, it was not perfect (remember, nothing is!) but it was far less risky and stressful than just starting full-time from scratch. I gave myself the room to get it right.

It was also super exciting doing this, too.

I have to admit – starting a business on the side gave me purpose like I've never felt before. Sure, it was hard at times, but there was something electrifying about working on my own project. I had my day-to-day during the day, and then I got to go home and create a business that was all mine. Mine to define, grow and shape however I liked. Building a website and defining the brand. Choosing colours and determining my prices. It was all energising and fulfilling to me, breaking the monotony of the everyday.

I truly hope you feel the same way; and if you're reading this book, you probably will.



What about you?

Ok so, if you choose this method, know that it's going to mean some long days and nights trying to juggle effectively two jobs. Starting a business needs a lot of dedication, commitment and time, of which, you're going to find you have less and less of as time goes on. However, it's worth it in the end. It's what you really want to be doing, hopefully! If you've got it to a place where it's rearing to go, congratulations! Just remember: when it does become two full-time jobs, it's time to give the salary job up and fly – don't make the excuse to continue this way as you'll burn yourself out very fast.

Again, there's no right or wrong to this choice, but from my experience, this method worked well, especially if you can't take the inevitable income hit when you start.

So – ask yourself.

Can you afford to give up your current life and go all out?

Or, are you content with starting a side-hustle while working?

Do you have the motivation to continue with a safety net there?

How serious about this are you?

All of these questions are a good way to determine where you are in terms of making a decision. If you are a little unsure about what you want your business to be, the role it will play or how you will define it, then I suggest taking the side-hustle option to work it all out. It will give you more of an opportunity to work out all of the kinks and get it to a place you're finally comfortable with. Just, promise not to wait too long to launch – nothing is ever perfect.



Insight 11:

Did I mention it takes a lot of your time?

I'm going to reiterate this a few times.

Your business is going to take a lot of hours. A lot and a lot of hours. Night hours. Morning hours. Weekend hours. "Holiday" hours. If you tell yourself you're going to be strict with your boundaries, that will end pretty fast. As well-intentioned as you may be, everyone wants their business to succeed – and that takes work. Work takes hours. Strange hours.

What I mean is that you'll constantly find yourself in the state of deciding whether to just call it a day or push through to get those next items done, and you'll choose the latter. It's not about being a workaholic or anything. It's just how a business works. For instance, it will be 5pm on a Friday, and a new client wants your pitch on Monday morning if you want to be considered. You'll end up choosing to work over the weekend to get that pitch in. Or it will be 9pm and you have a deadline the next day.

Sure. You can say no. But this is not a 9-5 job where you can say to colleagues: "it can wait until tomorrow", as most instances, it literally can't wait if you want to win.

Yes, you should set boundaries for your health. Of course you should. But just know that those boundaries get very stretched, especially in the earlier years when you're trying to lift your business off the ground.



I'm not trying to deter you. I'm trying to prepare you with this warning.

Trust me, it's better to know it beforehand.

Tell your partner and family too. Be honest with yourself and them upfront so that you don't find yourself getting berated for needing to spend some seriously long hours doing your thing.

For me, I found that clients wanted to talk to me during the day, have meetings and discuss projects. I would spend all day doing this, and networking and getting briefed in... and then have to spend all night doing the actual work!

I wanted to succeed so I had to do it. There was no choice.

If I didn't, I'd be booking all of these projects and then never getting them done, which would have meant no pay, unhappy customers and a quick plummet to failure. Now, every business works differently, but this is just part and parcel of how the journey begins. It takes so much time every day to keep it going because the buck starts and stops with you. No excuses.

If you're not willing to put in those hours, then I'd suggest you wait until you are.

I've heard it so many times.

That plumber, hairdresser or lawyer. They're employed and see how successful it is. However, they don't see all the hours the owner is sinking in every day and night to keep the place going. So, one day, the employee sets out to start their own plumbing business, hairdressing salon and legal firm. How hard can it be? Only to get the shock of their life. Suddenly, their doing their usual job, plus the books, plus the cash flow, plus the management, plus the client acquisition, plus the marketing, plus the hiring, and the list goes on.



Remember, others won't understand.

This is where insight eight comes back into play here. Others just won't understand the time it takes. If you turn down a night of drinks or a social outing, know that 9-to-5ers are going to say, 'oh, have a night off' or 'you have to protect your time'. Yep, they're coming from a good place but they aren't familiar with what a business truly takes. It takes hours and hours.

Weekends, holidays, midnights... it's just one of those things, especially at the start. I found hiring employees helps a lot, but for me, it still takes many hours. Remember that, as an entrepreneur, it's not just the work you need to do. It's self-improvements, administration, hiring, training, quoting, meetings, planning, strategy and more.

You're always on, and you're always thinking. It's just what it takes to get your creation off the ground and get it flying.

Also know that this phase will take a few years.

It's not just going to be a few months of long hours (sorry). It can take a very long time to settle the balance back down to a sense of normalcy again. I just want you to know the reality because if you think you'll be different, chances are, you're wrong (again, sorry!).

There will be many times when you're out in a meeting and then you get out, only to check your phone and find 15 emails that all need action. You'll be glad, because it means you have work coming in! But this work doesn't magically do itself and, if you don't put the time in, your clients will go somewhere else. This is where the countless hours come in: getting the projects done, plus all of the admin around it, like quotes and invoices and so on.



I've had many people say: "Chris, it was your sheer determination and 'over-servicing' of your clients that made you successful." Yes, very true. But I believe that, in such a competitive world we live in today, you need to 'over-service' to stand out and be your customers' go-to choice.

The reality is this: if you're serious, then it's going to take hours of work and you need to put them in if want to ensure your business is a success.

Don't worry! It's not all bad.

Fortunately, if you've found an endeavour you really love, it won't feel like work at all.

I personally enjoyed all of the time I put in, as it doesn't feel like a 9-5 job when you have your own business. Like I've said previously, there's nothing more enjoyable than having your very own project that you can work on. It gives you invigorating enthusiasm and the hours don't really seem like a lot as it's more like a savvy investment than a burden. If you find a business idea that makes you feel this way, then you're onto a winner.

So – ask yourself.

Do you understand the time it will take to start up and maintain your business?

Are you prepared to give up those hours to invest into your business?

Have you let those close to you know that you'll be spending a lot of time working on it?

Can you maintain the conviction to invest those hours?



So long as you're mentally prepared, knowing that this is a big commitment and that nothing comes easily without the hard yards, then you're already ahead. It's when people don't expect it that they get the biggest surprise. However, now that you've read this, you're good to go.

Speaking of time, here's my next insight that will explain WHY your business takes so much time.



Insight 12:

One eye on now.

One eye on tomorrow.

One of the biggest challenges you'll face when starting and running your business is finding the perfect balance between working on your current projects and filling your pipeline with incoming projects.

In other words, knowing when to work in your business and when to work on your business; when to focus on operations, sales and overarching strategy.

If you spend all of your precious time working on your current client workload, your clients are happy because they're getting their products or services from you in a timely fashion, and that makes them happy. They tell everyone and it can lead to positive word of mouth. But then they leave, and you've got no more work to go onto next. This means no more income! Suddenly, you're in a void between orders. So, you have to quickly slog away to get more work coming in, and this can take a bit of time to get things moving again.

Then, if you collect a lot of upcoming work, you immediately focus back on doing those projects and the process all starts again. You complete all that new work and you have nothing next, so you get back to prospecting and it continues this way.

This is a bad cycle to get stuck into – trust me.

It's called the "feast and famine" cycle for obvious reasons.

You're full then starving then full again. We all do this at the start and then you soon realise it's very unsustainable. It's a stressful way to do business because you're constantly running the ups and downs rather than finding a nice midpoint.



That's what I mean by one eye on now and one on tomorrow. You need to find the right balance between prospecting for future orders or projects and undertaking your current workload, while making time to determine where your business is heading. This balance is hard to find but you need to get there if you want your business to survive. If it's out of sync, then you're going to struggle.

You're not alone, by the way.

Every business has this challenge to deal with.

If you're in this up and down cycle, my advice is to find a way to smooth it all out so it's more consistent. Some fellow business owners I know suggest using retainers or subscriptions to get more consistency. That way, you're always fulfilling orders over and over. However, I found that never really worked for me (however, it's an option that may work for you).

That's because, for the services I provided, they didn't need all of the time and so, forcing businesses to use me every month pushed the risk of clients getting frustrated with me, trying to find uses for my service. It better suited my model to say to them, "we're here when you need us." Sure, I stayed in touch regularly, but I wasn't that annoying person hanging around.

I personally found smart pipeline management worked best.

This means finding a sweet spot between nurturing incoming leads, managing your current workload and planning your business' future. Don't worry – you'll get good at this. Just keep in mind that you have to find your own perfect balance. It's unique to you and your business.



Remember – your clients have their own schedules.

Before you start deciding how you're going to juggle everything, you have to take one extra layer of complexity into account.

One thing I learned early on in business is that you can't make your clients fit around your timetable! Despite how much you try, you have to fit around theirs. Yes, you can tell them when you can fulfil orders and manage delivery expectations to help align better with your own schedule, but that can only stretch so far.

Often, you'll find that everything hits all at once, with lots of clients coming in wanting orders immediately. "I need this asap!" "Chris, can you call me urgently?!" "When can I expect this?" It's a stressful time trying to manage that workload, but you're just thankful you've got requests coming in and invoices going out. Then, suddenly, they all go away and you've got nothing and you're left thinking: what happened?

It's so hard to not think it's a conspiracy sometimes! You laugh at me now, but honestly, you'll find yourself wondering if all of your clients are sitting on a messenger platform, plotting against you. "Alright, everyone! It's 3pm on a Friday. Are we all ready to request urgent projects from Chris?! Let's hit send together!" "Right, now that he's at his wit's end, let's all disappear by coincidence! That will get him wondering what happened!"

It's not the case, of course. Sometimes, there's just a natural ebb and flow – as suspicious as it may seem. That's why finding the balance is important so that you're able to withstand it all.

But it's never easy.



Here's a really good tip to help you.

As a marketer, I'm going to give you some advice:
ALWAYS BE MARKETING.

Always. During Christmas, on the weekends. Even when you're bursting at the seams with work. Still be marketing. Because it's nurturing new leads while you're working. Keep your marketing machine going, rain hail or shine.

Write this down and put it into practise. Every... single... day. Even if you're super busy and can't stomach the thought of marketing when you're running at 150%, still be marketing.

You see, clients get exposed to you and reminded of you when they see all of your marketing. Whether that's a simple email or a proper EDM campaign, a social media post or an advertising promotion, this is all creating a consistent presence. If you're always marketing, it means that you're always getting exposure. This way, while you're tinkering away on your projects, the next group of people are being exposed and reminded of what you do.

Remember when I said you can't force customers to work around your timetable? What I mean is, they all have a "lead time". Some will act immediately, and others will take months. But, if you're always marketing, you'll have a constant flow of leads from both extremes.

This is how I do it. I have marketing promotions and activities all running constantly – both paid and unpaid. Google Ads, social media posts, newsletters, networking and more. These all work collectively to keep my brand top of mind within my community so that my ideal audience is always thinking of me. The goal is to be top of mind when they need you.

Keep this stream of leads incoming rather than in spikes and you'll be much happier because you'll have more consistency. Trust me!



So – ask yourself.

Are you prepared for the feast and famine waves?

Can you find your own balance between prospecting, operating and strategising?

Do you have the willpower to stick with it, even when things are running fast, then slow, then fast again?

Will you be prepared to 'always be marketing'?

All of these initiatives should help you find the middle ground you need to succeed.

As I said, this cycle is just a normal part of business – it's how you manage it that matters. You need to be able to recognise when you're off-balance and get on top of it fast by keeping an eye on both today and an eye on tomorrow. Sure, there are going to be emergencies where you will find yourself slanting to one side, depending on what's happening at the time, but just keep in mind that the sweet spot involves evenly distributing yourself so that the business always has a present and a future.

While there will always be ups and downs in workload and demands on your time at different stages of the year, you'll find that, so long as you recognise the need to find more balance and consistency, you'll get there.

Speaking of ups and downs...



Insight 13:

Get ready for the rollercoaster

The entrepreneurial journey is an absolute rollercoaster of a ride.

It's fast-paced, scary, exhilarating and you need to hold on.

You have huge highs and very low lows, which can be a big shock for someone new to the entrepreneurial world. When you don't run a business, things tend to go more in a straight line, hovering in the middle more. Sure, there will be fast and slow times, but it doesn't impact you as significantly as when it's your own business.

I alluded to this rollercoaster experience in many of the earlier chapters. You'll hear other business owners say this a lot and, at first, you won't know what they mean. But you'll learn quickly that this is very true. Let me explain: when you start and run your own business, there are ups and downs.

Big ups and downs.

The ups are great and you'll be super happy. For instance, you'll secure a big pitch that brings in thousands of dollars or win an award that gets you recognised amongst all of your peers. You'll have a record-breaking month or hire the perfect employee. Yippee! You're killing it. You can't understand why people say that business is hard.

Then boom.

You experience the downs and you'll question why you do this at all. Sometimes the downs will come the next day. A rude customer leaves you a horrible review on Google or one of your top managers hands in their resignation. You lose a long-term client to a competitor, or all of your projects suddenly dry up. Now, you're wondering why you even do this. All of your friends have it so easy.

Then up you go again and then down and up once more. This is just part of the entrepreneurial journey. Unlike the previous insight, where keeping an eye on your present and pipeline is more within your control, this insight is about the external environment and its emotional impact on you as a person. When things are up, you feel it. When things are down, you feel it.

I asked a Mentor once: do these eventually smooth out?

He laughed. The way that someone who has been through it many times laughs.

This guy was a business rollercoaster veteran.

However, despite this, he gave me great advice that I'm going to give you: the rollercoaster will always be there. You'll just be at a different part of the theme park. This means, you'll always have those quintessential ups and downs – they come with the territory - but they just look different at different stages of your business' development.

For instance, you'll close your very first massive deal and you'll be on cloud 9! How exciting! You did it! Then, you have to do the work and while you're doing it, your client starts to change their expectations. They ask for something different, and then you get stressed because this will take you a long time – time you hadn't forecasted.

So, you wrestle with whether you discuss this with them or just go with it, which sours the experience a little. Then you complete the work and you're proud of it! But they come back and say it's not what they wanted, so you go back to work on it. The second round of work, however, they love and boom, you're back up! Yey, celebration! But then no work comes in after that and you realised you didn't fill your pipeline enough.



Or you hire your very first employee and you're super happy that you've found the right one. But now you have to train them, which means weeks of slower productivity. To catch up, you have to work overtime and they're making mistakes you have to fix. This is normal, but it's a low point. Then, they start getting things right and suddenly, you've doubled your capacity – you're back up and everything is wonderful.

Further down the track, you now have a team of twenty. You're thrilled as you can't believe how much you've grown over that time. They're all working well and your business is soaring.

Congratulations, you've reached your 98th high. Suddenly, you find yourself struggling to manage all of their workloads and you've stopped doing what you love, so you can manage the group and keep them efficient. It's a bit of a low. Then they do well and together, earn the business its first million! Wooo! Months later, your best manager leaves you, taking with her years of experience along with it (maybe a client or staff member too). You're happy for her, but now begins the road of replacing what's lost.

You get it. Ups and downs – it's the norm.

I find that the answer is simple: it's all about being mentally prepared.

So – the lesson here is that, unlike the pipeline insight (Insight 12) where you have control over how to smooth out your project pipeline surges, for the entrepreneurial rollercoaster cycle, it's just one of those things. Sure, you psyche yourself up mentally for these highs and lows to soften the blows (and that's what the point of this insight is), however you can't really escape it.

Don't fight it, but don't wait for the other shoe to drop either.

It all comes back to where the buck starts and stops: with you.



Unlike a corporate environment where you are more insulated, your own business means you feel absolutely everything and it's going to be quite the ride.

Just remember what I said earlier on in this book: you need passion and hunger. This is what makes the highs so enjoyable and the lows, acceptable.

So – ask yourself.

Are you a person who likes to hover around the 5s out of 10s? Or experience the whole lot?

Are you willing to experience the ultimate highs knowing that there are also ultimate lows?

Do you deal well with unpredictable impacts and the influence it has on your emotions?

Have you got someone in your life who you can celebrate wins with and commiserate losses with?

While we all want to be in total control, and you may be thinking, “I can do things to ensure this never happens”, just know – we all go through it. Every single successful entrepreneur has the rollercoaster experience. It's unique to everyone, but it happens.

Don't worry – the highs certainly make it worth it, and in the end, looking back, you only remember those.



Insight 14:

Set expectations with everyone.

Setting expectations is one of the most critical business practises you will learn. If you do this right, trust me, you'll thank yourself over and over again.

You see, knowing what lies ahead puts people more at ease, and in business, nothing is truer for both yourself, your clients, your team and everyone around you. One thing I say to my team is over and over is: "we're in the business of setting expectations first and everything else, next."

What do you mean "setting expectations"?

Setting expectations means discussing the next steps, what's involved, what time frames and what will be delivered in what form.

But it's also about being crystal clear with all parties and having everyone agree before any action is taken. Also, get this in writing, whether by contract or in some form of evidence, like an email.

For instance, every time I discuss a project with a client, I am very clear about asking exactly what they're after and then confirming my understanding. When I don't, I pay the price. If a client says: write a pamphlet, I go back and ask for more details and outline my thoughts, finishing the email with something like: 'is this correct?' I let them confirm or amend, and further discuss anything I'm not 100% sure about. If we get to a good point, I'll then discuss all next steps, like delivery date, costings and what I'll be doing.



Why this is so critical.

One word: disappointment.

Everyone interprets things differently. This is just human nature. By clearly setting expectations upfront, you can narrow interpretations and align them with everyone, so no one ends up disappointed.

Let me give you an example to explain.

Let's assume that your brand makes bath bombs – those dissolvable globes that bubble up in the water and release a nice smell, fizzy up the bathwater and make it more of a fun, relaxing and colourful experience. One day, you get a call from a boutique shop that wants to stock your products and it's a great deal! They look on your website or speak to you about your rose-scented range and they're excited about it. You give them a quote, they agree and you fulfil the order, only for them to call you a week later and ask why real rose petals weren't in the bombs. You explain that you use synthetic rose scents because it works better. However, it's too late. They're disappointed.

The experience with your business has now been a poor one, no matter what you say after the fact. Even if you say real rose petals would cost double the price or they don't smell as vibrant, their expectations were off from yours so they may not consider using you again and even tell people that they had high hopes for you but you let them down.

Ok, now in the same example, let's say you do put rose petals in there and you give them the quote. They refuse as they just say there's no profit in there for them. Again, expectations were off. Or how about, the opposite: you make super luxurious bath bombs with real rose oil and rose petals that simply explode with pungent aromas. You're super proud as they are top quality bath bombs that you've spent years researching how to get the blend right and the cost, affordable. You send them off with a massive smile. They receive your pack and, sure, they're happy – but they just don't understand how good your product truly is. You call them the week after to get some praise, but they just don't appreciate the quality and detail of your product. Again, expectations were off.



What should you do in this case?

You, your staff and your website should make your deliverables and processes far clearer to the shop. Explain why it's so expensive, or why you use synthetic oil rather than real oil. Use great design work and copywriting to sell the quality so it positions your bath bombs exactly how they should be treated. That way, customers can truly appreciate what you're creating, what you're delivering and their expectations, because you're setting up the premise. You'll find that clients who truly appreciate your value will contact you and they'll know what they're going to get.

The reality is, nothing is worse than disappointing people, especially a client. It hurts as your reputation is on the line. "Oh... is that it?" or "Ah... we we're expecting something more than this" puts you on the backfoot as you have to then either tell them that's it or you have to go above and beyond to realign their expectations after delivery – and that is very hard.

Usually, if you just make it clear from the start, you'll end up with a far better end result overall.

This expectation principle applies to every business. Coaches need to explain what they're offering to avoid their clients misunderstanding what they actually do. Artists must be clear about what they're performing or creating. Lawyers, accountants, creatives, cabinetry joiners, solar panel providers, cafes and restaurants. All of us need to be clear.

It's not just for external customers.

This principle should be applied to everyone, including internal staff and other stakeholders too.

Explain your expectations of your team members and their responsibilities, rather than just guessing your way through it all and assuming they know what you're thinking. This is always a recipe for disaster.



For instance, when I assign a task to my team, I don't just say: "write this project". Neither do I micromanage them. I say, "I'm expecting this end result back." Try this, as that way, you're being clear about the outcome you're after rather than setting them up for your disappointment, where they under-deliver because you didn't explain the end-goal, or conversely, you're setting them up for their disappointment because they go above and beyond and you can't understand what they did.

It's all about setting expectations. Yes, it seems simple, but it's extremely powerful for a successful business.

This is also where you can do that under-promise, over-deliver technique.

It's an oldie but a goodie. Use expectations to impress people! Tell them a week, and deliver in 3 days, as an example. By doing this, you make it very clear, there is no confusion and you set yourself apart from the crowd.

They'll love you very quickly and spread the word. But it all still comes from setting expectations upfront.

If you don't, you leave this up to their interpretation, and when that happens, you're setting yourself up for problems. It means that, what you're aiming for may not be what they're thinking and you haven't taken the time to clear up any confusion or miscommunications. Trust me, you'll thank yourself when you go back and just say: "Can I just confirm my understanding?" and rewrite everything out, then wait for them to confirm. Yep, it's slightly slower but worth the clarification. Some would say it's more efficient!



The extra benefits of setting expectations.

It's not just about "protecting yourself" in writing and avoiding disappointment– it also gets them on board with your thinking. You see, if a client says to me: write a brochure and I just do it without getting more clarification, they're definitely going to come back with a lot of edits, as I haven't set the ground rules around what the scope of work is. This wastes both my time and theirs.

Being proactive about setting expectations matters because you can set boundaries and remain in control of the parameters of an exchange, rather than leaving things to chance or interpretation.

So, take a few more minutes upfront to get everything clear before you begin – for both of your sakes.

When I say set expectations with everyone – I mean everyone.

As I already said, clients externally and staff internally are a given. However, don't overlook business partners, colleagues and even competitors and other brands. Take my rule of thumb here: whenever there is a human being, you need to firmly set expectations.

My Operation Manager once asked me why I spend so long discussing the processes, deliverables and steps involved with working, and I told her earnestly: business is all about expectations first, and everything else, second. It really is.

I now make all my clients fill out an online form that prompts them with questions of what they're looking for. This way, I can get all the necessary information I need out of them. And if I need more, I ask. This significantly reduces any miscommunication and means I get closer to the mark of a successful delivery, every time. Don't just think this is for service-based businesses – it also applies to product businesses as well. If someone makes an order or requests a shipment, be certain before you ship as you'll be thankful you don't have to pay to correct problems that occur later because you didn't fully clarify your understanding or their meaning.



Remember – if something goes wrong in your business, it may not be your fault, but if you've failed to set expectations, then it becomes your problem, nevertheless. Even if you determine it's technically a client or colleague's fault, you still have to manage the problem regardless. So, I'll say it again – set expectations every time.

To set expectations, you need to understand them first.

In order to take control, you need clarity yourself first.

You can't set a task for your staff if you aren't clear on the final deliverables.

While things are never perfect, like I said in Insight Three, you need to have clarity over what you're doing at that moment. Let me explain.

In the early stages of my business, my processes weren't perfect and I was still finding my way through the building process.

However, when performing projects for clients, I knew my process was, take a brief, be clear and tell them there were two rounds of included edits. I did these two rounds of changes because I understood that people wanted the comfort knowing there was room for flexibility after the first draft, but these edits were limited, so they took the editing process seriously.

Knowing this meant I could set expectations and take control of the process to gain the benefits of this.

Think back to the bath bomb example, above. Sure, you may be figuring around your range of scents, your price points and your creation method, but when you're working with clients, you need to be clear about the order, the transaction and the expectations. Don't let a client say, for instance, "can we try a sample?" and say back, "yeah I guess." Instead, say, "absolutely. Our policy is, we offer 5 bath bomb, one of each type, so you can sample the range and then, we set a meeting a week later to discuss your thoughts and feedback."



So – ask yourself.

Are you clear on your deliverables?

Do you know how to set expectations around each exchange?

Are you ok with taking control and setting boundaries?

Setting expectations is incredibly important in business, and doing this effectively is important for everyone. It's not about being inflexible. It's not about saying "my way or the highway". It's about being clear about the next steps, even if you do negotiate, so that everyone's on the same page and you're avoiding disappointment.



Insight 15:

Plan, plan, plan and be always ready to adapt

Cliché time now. You probably expected this! But I really can't stress how important it is to plan ahead.

However, before I lose you, let me clarify. I'm actually not a big fan of over-planning extensively. I find that business, especially at the smaller end, can't simply stick to a rigid plan for very long. Not from a lack of discipline (mostly...) but because the turbulent environment throws you around like a boat in a raging sea.

For instance, you set a goal to make \$100,000 worth of product or service sales this year. So, you plan this process out according to how this could be conceivable, such as making time for production, prospecting, marketing and so on. Then, as I said in Insight Five – you soon find within three months of work, that clients want a different variation of your product or your service needs a different angle, and that's thrown out your original plan.

This is normal.

The difference, however, is that your objective and plan combination gave you direction which allowed you to discover the differences you needed to make. Going in completely blindly without a plan is very inefficient and costly – two attributes that you just can't afford, especially in the earlier years of business.

Create a map that provides comfort in direction and then use it as a guide until you need to change it based on your learnings and experience while following it.



Just don't go overboard.

While a plan is always a smart choice, some people can go too far, even to the point of using it as a procrastination tool! They focus on this gigantic, intricate document with every step mapped out. However, that circles back to being inefficient again, because, as I said above, things change fast.

If you make a cumbersome plan, it's just not very user-friendly and you'll find it just gathers dust in your drawers or as a stray file on your laptop's desktop. You'll also end up defending it instead of being open to adaptation because you are so attached to your masterpiece of a plan. Instead, make a quick, sharp document that sets the course of your intention and helps you determine the boundaries of your business. Then get started and be ready to adapt.

Even something as simple as a to-do list which leads to an objective is a good plan.

Don't use "things will change anyway" as an excuse to avoid planning. You see, it's far better to have a course in mind that you can set your focus on, as opposed to just heading out into wide open sea and hoping for the best.

How do you plan?

You'll be thankful to know that it's not overly complex.

In my experience, start by defining your business' vision and mission, then set your goals for 6 months, a year and 5 years. Then, every quarter, revise and adapt to circumstances that have occurred. This means that your direction is somewhat in your control and you're ready to adapt as needed.



I personally keep my plans fluid and always involve my team. Every month, we check in and see where we are, what we're doing and where we want to head next. We then develop strategies and tactics accordingly, such as teaching a new class or increasing the social media posts that we've gained the most traction out of. This means that we have a sense of direction and control but we don't spend days writing and rewriting a document.

My advice is, always keep things practical.

Whatever works for you and gets you the results you need is the right choice. If you find that this fluid planning is too flexible for your liking, then plan out more extensively – so long as it's not a way to delay action. Planning can feel rewarding and super comfortable, however it has diminishing returns. Do what you need to do to give you a compass to success and then, go go go!

The consequences of not planning.

I've already alluded to it. But here it is again, so you don't miss it!

No plan means no direction, and this means you're that business that never truly understands itself, what it's doing, what customers you're serving and what you're after next.

Those businesses struggle a lot because they confuse their audiences and confuse themselves.



So – ask yourself.

What is your vision for your business' future?

How will you enact this vision with your business' mission?

Can you map out what success looks like this year, the next 5 years and 10 years?

Ok, so now, what are your 5 or so goals for this year?

What few steps for each goal do you need to act upon to achieve them?

Are you ready to adapt according to your experience and the market's movements?

Are you prepared to check your plan every quarter and realign it?

Remember the age-old adage: if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail. Again, argh clichés. However, whoever came up with this was right.

Don't fear plans. Embrace them as, when your heart is truly in it, you'll find plans extremely motivating. I know that my coach is a big fan of having your plan printed on your desk or on a whiteboard that you can see every day. Having this visible every day, especially before you start your work, can be a huge source of empowering motivation that keeps your eyes on the bigger picture.



Insight 16:

Hire fast

People, people, people.

They're the lifeblood of your business, however they don't come without complication. The thought of hiring can be scary, especially the first few times.

I'm not going to lie. This insight is a very hard lesson to learn but one that business owners must realise and act on sooner rather than later. Let me explain.

The hiring paradox.

I had a business mentor explain this to me. She said, "In my second year, I was making around an \$80,000 profit, but the work was coming in very fast and I could see significant growth in the next 12 months. I was so under the pump that it hurt. I had no hours to spare. I knew I needed some help, but how could I hire? Someone I needed would be around \$80,000 – that was my entire profit amount! I worried that would take me back to square one. But I couldn't continue like this, so I bit the bullet, hired and now together, we earn \$300,000. That's enough for her salary and I've increased my profit."

That's it in a nutshell.

Yes, sure – this is an ideal scenario when hiring. There are things that can go wrong, however, the point still needs to be made. If you're at the point where it "hurts" (as she put it), don't see hiring as a cost – a good hire is an investment.



Despite her wisdom, I heard it and proceeded to ignore it. Then found myself in the same situation. I held out, suffered, eventually hired and then went: she was right! I wish I had have listened earlier.

I was speaking to another mentor (yep, I had a few because they were so good to learn from – remember Insight Seven!), and he had a Marketing Agency for over 15 years. He said, in the earlier years, he spread himself far too thin trying to do everything and didn't have enough staff. He, too, was worried about cutting into his profits and worried that extra staff couldn't do it as well as he could. However, he also told me that these were the most stressful few years of his life and if he could do it again, he would have hired earlier and reduced his service spread.

Now, after a few years in business, I'd recommend the same. It's not about rushing to hire. It's about acknowledging that you can't (or shouldn't) do it alone.

Why are we scared to hire?

You may not be. But most business owners are.

The reason is simple. We're used to doing things ourselves. We're used to wearing many hats and "no one can do it like we can".

However, there are only so many hours in a day and so much we can push ourselves before we realise that another set of hands would be very welcome. Yes, it may feel like a step back for us, especially the first few times, what with the revenue loss and the hours of training trying to get them up to speed. Despite this, with the right hire, you'll find it's soon three or four steps forward.

Then, if you repeat this over and over, the incremental growth of one step back, three forward, leaves you very in the positive, especially over the longer term.



Yes, hiring is complex.

This doesn't mean go all out and hire five people and hope for the best.

I found it's more like a progression of productivity flow. For example, start with yourself and wait until you're at about 80% capacity, and then hire. Use your final 20% to train and manage them and let them then get to 80%. Once there, hire again and so on. This "stepped" approach keeps costs under control but makes sure you're never maxed out. Don't get to 100% and then freak out as, by that point, you then have no time to hire, train and manage, even though you have to.

Perhaps look at your business and decide where you draw a line in the sand. Where is your 80%? Is it when you're working 5 days a week, and, as soon as you get to 6, you hire? Perhaps it's a monetary or booking figure. It all depends on what you feel is necessary. Just don't get to that 100% or 120%, as this can be incredibly stressful. Imagine trying to hire amidst a storm of overwhelming orders and that poor person, coming on board, only to see chaos as their first impression of how things are done in your organisation. You'll be emotional, your training quality will lack and they may feel your impatience. It's a nightmare.

Remember – I ignored this the first time and paid the price.

I've been there. That's how I know. You see, it's easy to overlook as you start off. You're finding your way, you have a limited budget and things are getting into a groove. So, the thought of hiring someone seems so foreign. But you'll hopefully get to that point soon, and you should see it as success! Hiring means growth. Be thankful that you've got this opportunity to grow. Again, don't see them as an expense but an investment. It's that whole one step back (their wages), three steps forward (their potential and contribution).



Of course, don't forget that every business is different. I'm giving you my perspective and you may face slightly different circumstances, but from what I've heard, my scenario is pretty common.

When I say “hire” – it's not just internal, full-time staff.

Consider outsourcing functions that you hate or don't have the expertise to do.

For instance, I hate the numbers and taxation duties behind my business. So, after slaving away at it for two years, I found a good Accountant and a Bookkeeper and gave all of that to them. Now, all my payroll, tax, BAS and paperwork is all done by experts, so I can focus on what I do best. There's less risk of me making mistakes and spending more time fixing my errors.

You don't want to be in business doing things you don't like – find people who can do them for you so you can put more time into tasks that expand your business and make a real impact. The idea is that you can make more income to exceed their fees rather than holding yourself back trying to do everything personally.

Trust me – there are only so many hours in the day and it will come to a point where you'll want to trade some of your revenue to get someone to take a part of the workload off your shoulders. I'm not going to give you tax advice here, but spending some of your earnings on resources, staff and outsourced services is often worth the trade-off from a tax standpoint too. My Accountant said that just making pure profit on yourself means you're going to get taxed at the highest rate, all while you're spending 14 hours a day working; whereas if you hired, you'd only be working 8 hours and, sure, you earn less directly but that's less tax and more life back at the same time. Think about it and find your own balance.



Hiring fast also means hiring right.

Before I end this insight, let's put in a caveat about hiring the RIGHT people. You see, there are people out there that are wrong for your business and hiring them means you won't reap the benefits we just discussed above.

We'll discuss this in the next insight.

So – ask yourself.

Do you understand the importance of hiring?

Are you willing to shed your fear of hiring and embrace it?

Do you see hiring as one step back, but many forward?

Are you prepared to find your 80% mark and take action when you hit it?

Those two case studies in this chapter are a great illustration into what I mean by hiring fast. Trust me, now with a team of 10 and growing, I'm thankful for my team. Rest assured that each hire became easier and easier, as you learn where to put people and at one time.

Perhaps make an agreement with yourself: "When I get to X, I will hire." Then, celebrate! As, if you get to that point, you're making progress and you should be proud.



Insight 17:

Humans are your most important business asset

Speak to anyone in business and ask them: what's simultaneously the most challenging and powerful asset in business?

They will all say "people". More specially, internal team members and staff.

Your people, colleagues, partners, outsourced teams and employees can make or break your business. So, it's absolutely crucial to choose the right people. Again, ask any business owner the impact of choosing the wrong person. They'll shake their head and sigh. The wrong person can cause irreparable damage that's felt for years after they've gone. They may not simply be a bad worker, but just the wrong culture fit and that has ramifications too. Their poor or incompatible attitude can upset the balance of your other team members and affect relationships with clients too.

The power of the right people.

A collection of people builds a culture, which is the "bonding atmosphere" between everyone. You ALWAYS want your culture to be positive, productive and welcoming. This unites team members and motivates them forward to achieve your goals in a collaborative way. It keeps them motivated. It can be a blend of organic attributes, which manifest naturally, and nurtured attributes, such as leading by example, rewarding good behaviour, addressing weaknesses, encouraging development and, of course, hiring compatible people.

I heard a recruitment professional say to me recently, "someone's potential business culture fit is one of the qualities of a person that you can discriminate with, and it be a positive thing. That, along with relevant experience and qualifications."



A healthy culture has a multiplier effect on your business' productivity and internal wellbeing. If people enjoy coming to work, find the tasks rewarding and share a united passion for your goals, then everyone wins. This is not easy to do, and takes a lot of work – but is worth it.

In my business, I do simple yet powerful things often. For instance, I set up regular training sessions for the team and ask them what they want to learn, so they feel like they're growing. I also include them in business decisions, where relevant, so they have buy-in on the overall direction. I allow for autonomy, but always encourage them to ask for help. It's also a safe environment to make mistakes and be bold, so long as they can justify their actions. And, the best of all, we celebrate as a team. Every time we received a positive client testimonial, we congratulated each other and then, when we hit finally 100 five-star reviews on Google, I ordered doughnuts for everyone and we enjoyed afternoon tea together, even though some people were working remote.

Simple things. But powerful. Say thank you and lead by example. People are your most important asset, remember.

But it only takes one to poison this good culture.

That one person can come in and upset the balance.

We've all had that colleague who is a little negative. You've probably seen how fast this negativity spreads and, suddenly, everyone starts questioning the business. It spreads through an organisation like cancer and then, it's so hard as a business owner to fix as you don't know where it's started or what action to take to fix it. By then, it's just too late and the culture has become toxic.

See why the stakes are so high when it comes to hiring?



It all starts with hiring well.

So, what do you do? Strengthen your recruitment process.

First, be clear on why you're hiring, and for what role exactly. That will allow you to correctly articulate who you're after and what you're asking of them. If you recall from Insight 14, this is where you can take control by setting expectations correctly.

Want to know a secret? Don't just tell the market what you want. Explain what you offer in return, too! Be realistic but tell them about the benefits and what they can gain from this role in their career, beyond just the money. People want purpose and you can attract better candidates if you give them a reason to choose you. Are you thinking: that's not a secret? Then how come so many large companies and SMBs just don't do this? It's so overlooked.

So, write a really clear job advert that explains the benefits and responsibilities of the role, and take your time to screen all candidates to find the right one.

The interview process.

Now, when you're interviewing, don't forget to bring some solid questions and scenarios. Also, ask them if they have any questions too. All of these can really help you find the perfect person. If you keep these questions and format fairly consistent between candidates, you'll have a baseline in which you can compare them all.

Making the final call.

After all the boxes are ticked and you've got people that are ideal for the role, it's time to make a final decision. But how? The stakes are high, remember.

If you think back to Insight Nine about gut instinct. Well, use it here when recruiting. Be honest with yourself: who did you feel most aligned with? Who could best fit in with your style? Yes, yes, it's not a scientific approach. However, if the people in the final round can do the role with their skillsets and experience, then it comes down to who you feel you could best work with.

Tell them the good news, and then, make a plan on how to make them feel welcomed and how to get them settled in comfortably. When they arrive, simple things matter. Like, have their email set up and their computer ready (if that applies). Also, tell everyone they're starting too! Nothing is more confronting on your first day than the team asking: "who are you? What are you doing here?"

Creating a great culture goes beyond just hiring.

Then, once they're in your business, lead by example. If you're collaborative, happy and positive, it will filter down into the ranks. If you're always too busy, rude and obnoxious, then watch your staff turnover rate go through the roof. Don't belittle them but let them know that there are lines of reporting and expectations on deliverables. This keeps structure and standards but ensures that they feel heard and respected.

Spend time training and nurturing their skills, not just for your benefit but for theirs too. There's a saying some business owners recite here: "the risk doesn't come from training highly-skilled people and then leaving; the risk is poorly-skilled people staying."

I learned early on from my managers back in the corporate world that the ones who simply listened, nurtured and said "thank you" were the ones who inspired you the most. They earned loyalty. So do this in a genuine way. I always put my team first because if you do, they'll look after you and your business. This reduces costly absenteeism and staff-turn over.



I praise my staff when they do a good job, give them constructive feedback when they need it, share a bit of fun, reward them when they deserve it, and include them in decisions when I need to. This is so important to me and it has gotten me far.

Long story short: hire the right people and look after them. Full stop.

Will people leave?

Absolutely!

Unlike you, your staff are not a permanent fixture in your business. Nothing hits you harder than a resignation letter, especially if they're a great employee! No one wants to see a great contributor leave. However, be prepared that it's going to happen.

People look for new challenges or a change. They may even be unhappy. You may suspect or you may be completely blind-sighted. It's how it goes.

Remember that, most of the time, it's not personal. All you can do is be the best leader you can be, like I explained in the previous insight. However, there will be a time when people leave. As I said before: no one loves your business as much as you do. While people can be loyal, don't expect them to be with you for over 5 years, especially with today's workforce. If they do stay on, then it's a bonus – make sure you look after them accordingly!

When people resign, I suggest having an exit interview with them. Ask them for the truth of why they're leaving and gather feedback. When people are on their way out, they're more willing to divulge the realities and an exit interview is perfect for gathering insights that can really help you learn and make changes.

For instance, if they say, "I was really happy with most things, but I felt there was no clear development path", you can ask "what should we have done?".

Who knows! You may have an opportunity to keep them. However, at the very least, you can adjust to protect the rest of your workforce. Remember, even though they're leaving, treat them with respect and dignity.

Removing people.

Oh, yes. This.

Sooner or later, you're going to have to make that difficult choice to let someone go – for whatever reason. Bad performance, bad hire or you simply don't need that role any longer. Despite the why, know that it's just another part and parcel of business itself, just like failure is (from Insight Six).

This is, by far, my least favourite part. I always respect business owners who just know when it's time and do what is needed. In the end, they have less stress because they take action. Despite my reluctance, that's honestly how you need to confront a situation like this.

When a person is just not working out and you've followed all necessary steps, like performance management, then act. Don't wait.

I have found myself making excuses for weeks to avoid the conflict and simply putting up with bad performance. It's not good. In the end, you're hurting yourself, your team, your business and even them but failing to act. Once you give them sufficient notice and follow all of the legal requirements, let it be a clean break. To be honest, you're often setting them and your business free. You're also freeing your team from having to compensate for them.

Just make sure you take all measures to secure all files and get your equipment back. Change passwords and do what you need to do to protect the business. Yes, it's not pleasant, but this needs to be done. Seek help here with a qualified HR or staffing professional if you need it.



Sorry, I didn't mean to end this insight on a negative. However, it wouldn't be complete if this wasn't covered. People come and people go.

So – ask yourself.

Are you prepared for the people element of your business?

Do you have the leadership skills to set a good example?

Who can you ask for help if you need assistance hiring and motivating people?

Do you understand the role good people and a good culture play in your success?

Will you be ready to remove people if and when the time comes?

Never forget that people are a significant contributor to your business, at any size and in any industry. As I said, people are the biggest strength and simultaneously, the biggest worry as a business owner.

Yes, they will have needs, and sick leave. They will also never love your business as much as you do, and that's ok. That's normal. Don't expect this. But treat them with respect and provide a conducive environment to allow them to flourish. If you hit a point where firing or redundancy happens, then confront it courageously.



Insight 18:

Surround yourself with success

This one is an insight most people know but don't put into practise often.

Success breeds success. When you're around a motivated and passionate group of people, it's incredibly inspiring and infectious. You've probably heard and witnessed this yourself at some point. The company you keep has a big influence on your attitude and your feelings.

So, if you find a group of positive go-getters, you'll find a limitless source of motivation. You'll naturally talk about your next ideas, how you've overcome obstacles and generally how you can develop your skills. If you find the right group and have the right attitude, it's very invigorating, especially during all the ups and downs.

By the right attitude, I mean don't get jealous or frustrated. Instead, embrace it. I always tried to find people that were far more successful than me, so I could learn from them, hear what they've experienced and find their general energy aspirational.

The same is true for negative people, too.

You've probably heard the name "energy vampires". This is so true. When you have people around you who are doubting your drive or your potential success, soon you'll believe it too and they'll drag you down. It's hard enough to run a business, but to be doubted and discouraged makes it doubly so.

Avoid these people as it's hard to ignore their negativity if you're around them all of the time. Soon, you'll be just as negative as them. It's just human nature.



How to find great sources of success.

Motivating people are actually more accessible than you may think.

Try joining business networking groups and attending functions that you know successful people will attend. Again, the idea is not to get jealous, but to tap into their inspiring aura. It's not about: "why don't I have what they have?", but more, "how can I get to where they are?". Remember back to Insight 4 – it's not about comparing yourself to others. If you have the right attitude, surrounding yourself with go-getters and winners will make you a winner too. You can't help it – because you get energised by their passion and you take that away.

In my experience, I found that these kinds of people are even open to chatting about your business and helping you overcome problems too.

I joined many networking groups in Sydney like BNI and the Club Of United Business (CUB) to get in amongst people who I could talk to, share ideas and keep my spirits high – and it worked. It was a thrill being a part of it all, even as a smaller fish, because the right group of people will get you excited and motivate you to strive even harder.

Look around for local groups and attend as a visitor to suss out the atmosphere. There will be networks that simply don't suit you, so take the time to surround yourself with the right kinds of successful people that want you to be there and are happy to share their precious time with you. In return, show them the respect and professionalism that you both deserve.

Always remember – you get out what you put in. So, get involved.



Find a small, reliable group.

Another suggestion is to find a small group of, say, four business owners at similar levels to you who you keep in continual contact with.

This can really help surround yourself with successful, motivating people but it makes it a little more accessible.

I have this kind of group and we're all in an online messenger chat where we check in with each other often. It's not just about work or business challenges – although this is often the main topic. We also check in on our mental health, celebrate wins, create accountability, make suggestions and keep each other up to date with the latest from each other's field.

The benefits of something so simple as this can really be profound. Every time I get stuck in my head or need to sense check my thinking, I turn to them. Similarly, when they reach out and ask to workshop a problem they're having, I often learn a lot and the insights I gain from someone else's situation can often be applied to my own too. I'm also surprised at how much knowledge I actually have to contribute. This is another perk as it can reinforce my confidence in my own abilities too.

So – ask yourself.

Who do you surround yourself with right now?

Are there negative groups that you need to avoid?

Do you have a local networking group you can join?

Have you signed up for events where you can meet fellow business owners and entrepreneurs?

Do you have a reliable group of fellow business owners you can reach out to?



Surrounding yourself with passionate achievers is really intoxicating when you're trying to achieve your goals. That's why it's so important to be a member of as many of these groups and networks as you can, so long as they are serving a purpose.

Plus, the entrepreneurial road can be a lonely one at times. These groups can really offset this and create a lot of perspective for you as you hustle every day alongside them.



Insight 19:

Celebrate your wins

Have you taken the time to look back at the road behind you and see how far you've come?

Or, are you like most business owners and ambitious hustlers who constantly look forward at the next, big thing? While this seems admirable and a great attitude (and will get you far), don't forget to acknowledge all of your accomplishments too. Otherwise, you'll end up on what's called the hedonic treadmill. It's where you get addicted to constant busyness and then, nothing you ever do is enough.

We've all been there – me especially.

We go and we go and we go, until nothing we achieve is ever special anymore and this can quickly lead to burnout, frustration and even unfulfillment.

Break this vicious circle by taking the time to appreciate your success.

Don't forget to take the time to look at how much you've achieved and give yourself a bit of kudos for all the work you put in to get there. You deserve it and it's ok to reward yourself. Don't make victories "just part of the norm", as they will become that. Soon, you'll lose the spark to continue as it all becomes pointless.

Unfortunately, the entrepreneurial road is a bit of a thankless one, and you're usually to blame. I know I do this one very badly too. You kind of just keep going because you have to, rather than saying to yourself: look at what I've just done.



Every win is something you've earned.

The reason this insight is so important is because you risk starting to take yourself a bit for granted. Every win is a win and you need to remind yourself.

Why? Because if you don't take the time, then the road can become a relentless pursuit for the next thing, rather than a journey of triumphs over challenges. You can get very burned out because you just keep slogging away. Sure, you need to hustle and keep pushing the boundaries to ensure your business' ongoing success – but just don't forget to make a note of all the little wins along the journey.

It's not even that hard to do. Remember how I said in Insight 15 to write down your mission and goals? Every time you cross one off, be chuffed! You did it! Congratulations.

Find your way of keeping tabs on your victories.

For example, I keep a journal so that I can look back and see how far I've come every few months. I also celebrate little wins with the team so that it makes each win more of an event. Every time we get a 5-star review on Google, we have a little bit of a celebration and share the story behind how we earned it. I also post milestones on my LinkedIn, so I not only acknowledge certain achievements, but also share it with my network. This helps build a good reputation too and raises my public profile too (without gloating, of course).

It's funny – I always thought there was a culture of “tall poppy syndrome”, where people would tear down your victories. However, the most traction I get on social media is when I share a milestone or a testimonial. Try it for yourself and see.

For instance, I was honoured with the privilege of teaching the Marketing team at the Australian Bureau of Statistics in Canberra a few years ago. This was a momentous opportunity for me and my business. So, I put this on my social media and it was seen by tens of thousands of people.

However you want to celebrate is up to you – just make sure you do it.



So – ask yourself.

Now that your plans are all mapped out, how will you celebrate when you reach them?

Do you see milestones as just another step or are you willing to acknowledge them?

How will you share your little victories with your network, your team and yourself?

You're not a robot. Humans need praise for their wins as it recognises developments and assigns praise for hard work.

If we don't have this, when our lives are just a beige monotony. Remember that running a business is a significant journey with ups and downs. If you're not taking the time to appreciate all of your hard work, what's the point?



Insight 20:

Enjoy the entrepreneurial ride!

You made it to the last insight!

Carrying on from the previous one: enjoy the experience. If you're truly in the business world for the right reasons, then there's nothing quite like it.

Every day, you'll get up invigorated because you're making your own way in this life. You're building something unique, you're charting your own destiny and this is something that not many will experience. Sure, there are tough times, but if you're like me, you wouldn't trade it for the world. So, embrace it and enjoy having something that's all yours.

While I've done my best to equip you with all of my insights from my own journey, your path is your own and it's very rewarding.

Mindset is everything.

In the end, how you see it is how you'll see it.

I know – that sounds circular. But what I mean is, if you work those extra hours and enjoy it, it never feels like work. That's what I feel every day. When I was working in corporate life, I never hated a job, but I was just a machine in a cog. However, with my own business, I'm able to enjoy the process and it's great.

I hope you have this same experience, and that's where mindset comes in. Be positive about it. Don't see your business as a ball and chain – see it as an opportunity, and it will present many to you!



So – ask yourself.

Are you pumped? Excited?

Are you enjoying your journey?

Perhaps this is the reminder you needed. As I'm writing this, it's reinforcing my appreciation of the experience. So, it's what I needed too.

Just don't forget to enjoy it all. The hardships make the entrepreneurial road so rewarding and the victories are the cherry on top. It's an honour creating jobs, stimulating the economy and introducing new innovations into my industry.



Is it worth it?

With all of these insights, you may be thinking: wow, that's a lot. Is this even worth doing?

I'm sure you've read some of these insights and wondered if I was negative biased. Editing all of these chapters, I was thinking it myself! I was like, "am I trying to put people off?!" But, in the end, all of what I've written is from the truth of my experience – as promised – and I'm certain that all of my insights are shared by the majority of fellow entrepreneurs. From the very front cover, I promised that these insights would all be the things you need to hear to hopefully avoid the common pitfalls and emerge successfully.



So, is it still worth starting and running your own business?

Yes.

While it is a very personal question, from my experience, absolutely it is! The highs outweigh the lows, and you get an immense sense of satisfaction knowing all the results of your hard work are yours. Every win doesn't belong to your boss or a faceless corporation: it's yours and yours alone.

Yep, it's a challenge – but anything worth doing in life is.

Sure, 20 insights sound like a road full of mines of avoid. But I've now shared them with you so that you're well-equipped and can keep ahead of all of the pitfalls and learn from my experience. Basically, this book has gifted you with the time, learnings and removal of consequences of my own challenges over the last few years. You're welcome!

I hope you heed my insights and you enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it all.

Ok, that's enough theory and book learning.

It's time to get out there, build your empire and enjoy every minute. I wish you the best of luck. You'll do great. Go get it!



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