

CHAPTER 1 – NATURE’S CALLING

“To succeed, we must first believe that we can.”

- Michael Korda

Two great warriors are about to fight. One of the warriors volunteered because of his undying love for his country, the other was simply paid handsomely to fight. Which one would you bet on?

Always bet on the individual who is serving his calling, not the guy who is doing it for the money. It is the person who is serving his purpose and fulfilling his heart’s desire who will see his business through the good times and the bad. Those that are following their path will relentlessly march forward during the ups and downs, even as others give up to pursue something else. They will be there when the paid guys walk away. If you try to get rich by doing the next big thing, but it isn’t your passion, the competitor who really is passionate about it will eat you up and spit you out. Passion begets persistence. And persistence begets success.

Answer the Urge

For you to launch a dominant business, you must first find what you thirst for. This took me years to discover. When I started out I had this belief that entrepreneurs should do what they know, not what they want. I knew computers and liked working on them, so I launched a business related to that. But I didn’t *love* computers. It

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TPE TIP

The Business – While not the best form of legal protection, Sole Proprietorship is a cheap way of getting started, since there are no setup costs. There are fees associated with setting up an S-Corp, C-Corp and limited liability corporation (LLC). Of course, as you make money you will need to pay taxes just like anyone else, and you will want to incorporate down the road. Consult with an accountant (not one you pay for, but one who is a qualified expert from a local college) on next steps. An LLC is often the most economical and effective way to go.

was my vocation, not my passion. My first two businesses were successful, but not because I was passionate about technology. I didn't eat, sleep, and breathe tech.

But I loved entrepreneurialism. I could talk about business all day, read every magazine, attend every seminar, and still my thirst would not be quenched. It took me a few years to figure out what was sitting right under my nose the entire time: That I loved launching businesses. Once I came to the realization that it is the birthing and maturing of a business that I love, I knew the path my future would follow.

It doesn't have to take years to discover what really gets you jazzed. The key is to reflect and take the time now, rather than figure it out through trial and error.

What would you volunteer to do simply because of your love for it? What activities bring you the most happiness, energy and satisfaction? What makes you lose track of time, complete tasks almost effortlessly and come out even more energized? When you are talking with friends, what is the one subject you can just go on and on and on about, to the point they are rolling their eyes? Answer these questions and you've found your heart's desire. And when you have found your insatiable thirst, your passion, you will have taken the most important step to launching a company that will excel.

Perhaps you've had a fleeting thought of starting a business, or maybe you are on fire with ideas and ready to jump in full swing. Either way, you need to get started by stopping. No, that's not a typo. The best response to a waterfall of what-if dreams is a deep, thought-provoking breath. A successful launch is more about you and your beliefs than anything else. Committing to a business without intimately knowing yourself is a fool's dream. Going "all-in" on a bad hand is a stupid move, and so is jumping feet first into business without knowing the cards you're holding.

To get started at launching your company or to clean up a mediocre start, you must start by discovering yourself. You need to understand and acknowledge your heart's desire, your mindset, and beliefs. You need to lead with introspective thought. You need to learn all about what you're all about.

Just for a minute, if there were no limits to what is possible, what would you envision your entrepreneurial company providing you? The first thing that pops into almost everyone's mind is financial independence. I agree. I totally agree. But there is more, isn't there? What if building your business made you feel emotionally satisfied, totally happy? What if your business made a difference? What if you

woke up every morning excited to work? What if people loved your company? What if the world heralded what you did and happily consumed what you had to offer?

Owning a business is NOT about working your ass off for the sake of trying to squeeze out a living. It is NOT about making tons of money at the expense of losing tons of life. It IS about maximizing life, bettering your life and the lives of others, which, not so ironically, fattens your purse.

The greatest example of work-your-ass-off business ownership came from the quintessential entrepreneur himself, Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart. Walton started a company based upon a simple dream and went on to become one of the richest men in the world. The lesson? "I blew it." Those are the words Walton reportedly voiced from his deathbed. By his own measures he was a failure - a billionaire who barely knew his youngest child and was married to a woman who stayed with him for reasons short of a fulfilling relationship.

What final words would you like to utter? I hope they are words steeped with feelings of contentment, words that say that you lived life to the fullest, pushed beyond your limits and built a company that you are proud of both for how much it accomplished and how much it made.

If this is the type of success you want, you can have it. It all starts and ends with you. It doesn't start with where the market is headed. It doesn't start with the latest and greatest trends. It doesn't even start with what you believe the customers want. Your business starts with you.

Yesterday's financially-fat companies were able to market their way out of a crap product. If they ran enough late-night television ads

and made big, albeit false, claims in the magazines, they were guaranteed tons of customers. Disappointed customers, but customers nonetheless.

That was then and this is now. Today's successful businesses are growing because they are truly great. They are providing unmatched services and products, and the word is getting out, virally. No longer can you count on a marketing budget alone to bring loads of customers. Today you need to provide unmatched services and products. The marketing is done virally - at summer barbeques, in Internet forums, and on perpetual blogs. It's that simple. And for you to provide the best that you imaginably can, it needs to come from both your head and your heart. When your company comes from your soul, when your company is all about you, it becomes a formidable force.

Years ago a major corporation invited me to speak to a group of about forty marketing specialists that sold an insurance product and were trying to break into the small business market. They wanted to learn how to "speak" to the entrepreneur. The presentation was scheduled to start at 9 a.m., but we couldn't get started until 9:20 because everyone was late.

I started by asking them who woke up that morning excited to come to work. The few who raised their hands clearly did it for political posturing, not out of sincerity. Then I asked who loved their job so much that they came in an hour early to work, not because they had to but because they wanted to. All of them scoffed at me. I then explained that for this meeting I had arrived at 7 a.m., just to make sure I found the building and was ready to go. I then had breakfast next door and walked in 20 minutes early to set up.