

Franchise Opportunities – Fears That Drown Dreams

There are many reasons why an individual doesn't pursue the dream of becoming an entrepreneur. Some are legitimate reasons, including the fact that personal desires and dreams don't include being in business for yourself. Some people simply don't have a desire to be in business for themselves and that is perfectly legitimate.

However, it is interesting to note that studies show 70 percent of people have a desire to own a business, and yet so many never pull that trigger. Sometimes financial constraints, or personal and family reasons, are the inhibitors that simply won't allow for the beginning of a new venture.

While there are certainly legitimate reasons why a person may not become an entrepreneur, I will focus on the main reasons cited by people who would like to begin a business but haven't made that leap. I will also offer some thoughts on how to defeat the fear and progress towards the dream.

Fear of Failure

This item is probably the most paralyzing of all. Yet, if we examine the successful people we know, both past and present, we will come to understand they have not been frozen by the fear of failure. Should we not try to emulate the practices of those who are successful? If so, then the primary challenge is to shed the fear of failure. They did – all of them. It doesn't mean they didn't experience it, but it does mean they climbed past it. They probably blasted past it.

In their book *Power Networking*, Sandy Vilas and Donna Fisher proclaim that "life is either a daring adventure or nothing". Basically, if you don't dare to pursue opportunities, you will be stuck where you are forever. I am a true believer in a similar concept: If there is no risk, you're playing it way too safe.

To explain by way of a metaphor, if a basketball player finishes a game with no fouls, they were probably playing too safe, they probably didn't take risks that should have been taken, and they did not achieve their optimum result. And yet, each foul is a failure – but a failure that is a part of the overall success.

As humans, we have a biological make up that provides for the natural instincts to fight or run. When we experience the fear of failure, we feel anxious and nervous, which causes us to tighten up and quell actions. We tend to convert to natural defense mechanisms and escape to meaningless and time-eating activities. Instead of acting, we bury ourselves in television nonsense, newspapers, computer minutia, or whatever the medicine of the day dictates. That's the run-and-hide reflex.

The result is that vagueness sets in and we lose sight of the important issues that can change our lives for the better. Our natural reaction is "out of sight, out of mind – no worries". Of course, that means finding solutions or finding change for the better is an impossible feat. The contrary and effective line of thought is "bring it out and deal with it". Picture the worst result, and then use your imagination to identify alternatives. Realizing the worst scenario can have alternatives is powerful medicine, which will relieve the pressure and make action possible.

As you can imagine, the most powerful and successful have faced the fear, acted upon it, and realized they can survive it. That realization is a tremendous springboard to prosperity. Susan Jeffers said, "Feel the fear and do it anyway."

If I had to summarize six steps or thoughts to deal with the fear of failure, they would be:

- 1) Act boldly
- 2) Persist and never, ever give up
- 3) It's not personal
- 4) Change things, change results; keep things the same, don't expect different results
- 5) Ease up on yourself – tomorrow's coming anyway
- 6) Look for possibilities – there are always alternatives

One final thought about this subject – fear incapacitates unsuccessful people.

It's Not the Right Time

“As soon as the mortgage is paid, as soon as the kids are done college, as soon as I get my buyout at work; as soon as I learn everything there is to know about it, as soon as $2+2+2=4$. As soon as I am absolutely sure this venture will have zero risk and my astounding success is guaranteed.”

These thoughts are absolutely paralyzing. They are very real thoughts, and most are perfectly legitimate thoughts, but they are only thoughts and not reality. However, as I said, they are paralyzing.

There is a quote by Goethe that has always intrigued me and seems to strike at the very heart of this issue.

“There is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issue from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius and magic in it. Begin it now.”

We had a saying at work, and it was long before Nike made it famous as their advertising slogan. Whenever anyone hesitated to tackle a project, take a risk, or take that next step to get the job done, we would simply say, “Just do it!”

That attitude doesn't suit everyone, but perhaps it should. My guess is it does suit those successful people we aspire to be. The point is that the time to act is likely now, when the opportunity is present, as opposed to some ill-defined “when ... then I will ...”

Stated another way by Marsha Sinetar, “Intentions count as nothing if we do not translate them into action.”

Fire Hose Brigade

One of the largest “clubs” on earth is the “naysayers club”. No matter the idea, it is easy to find the naysayers and fire hose brigade to squelch the flames of passion and progress. Whether it's a spouse or family member, a friend who “knows about these things”, a business person “experienced” in these

matters, an advisor looking out for your best interests (translate that to, “I don’t advise clients to take any chances because I might get blamed”), or someone else, there will always be a multitude of people to tell you why you shouldn’t do something.

That’s not to say the advice of people close to you and those you respect shouldn’t be obtained and considered. It should. However, it should also be considered as only a part of the formula and not the primary decision criteria. If naysayers had the final say, we would still be in the dark ages because all progressive ideas and all leaps of faith that have driven our progress and our dreams over time would have been fire hosed by the naysayers clubs of the past. They are everywhere and always have been. They say things like “pull in the reins”, “batten down the hatches”, and “dig in your heels”.

We have a note in our marketing manual that says, “Don’t get caught in the negative norm”. We include it because it takes a conscious effort to look at things in a positive light. Our natural response to things is a resistance response, which can lead to erroneous judgments based only on the negative. It’s just the way we’re engineered, and if you are aware of that natural human inclination to the negative, you can weigh those responses accordingly and make a proper evaluation of opportunities.

In his book *If it Ain’t Broke ... Break It!*, Robert Kriegel talks about various forms of firehosers, including:

- 1) Super Rationalists – There is always a rational reason not to do something new – “That will never work”.
- 2) Bottom-Liners – New ideas are viewed as potential problems, rather than pragmatic opportunities.
- 3) The Seasoned Veteran – “Seen it all before” and can prevent you from wasting a lot of time, energy and resources.
- 4) Yeah, But – They seem to agree with you and then comes the “but” ... by the way, everything before the “but” is bull.
- 5) Naysayers – Focus on what’s wrong with any idea as opposed to the positive opportunities.
- 6) Things Will Get Back to Normal – It’s just a passing fancy, so leave well enough alone
- 7) Wait and See – Doing nothing is best until everything is perfect, which of course never happens.
- 8) You Can’t Teach an Old Dog New Tricks – Be afraid of learning something new and taking on new responsibility.
- 9) Better the Devil You Know – Change will only make matters worse, at least you know what you’ve got.

Of most importance is inner firehosing or self-doubt that cements us in place. We think things like, “It will never work”, or “Who am I to do that?”. Those types of thoughts result in self-defeat. Kriegel calls it the “Five D’s” – discouraged, disappointed, disgruntled, defeated and depressed.

Those successful people we all aspire to be think much differently than that. They think, “I’d rather confront the challenge. I am good enough to succeed. I’d rather ‘just do it!’”

Everyone has a choice whether they approach life, and the opportunities presented to them, with either gusto or timidity. Let the naysayers rule and timidity will never be defeated. Consider the naysayers' opinions – just make sure they are not just “Business Prevention Specialists” - and approach each opportunity with gusto. The world will open up.

Dreams are achieved only with gusto.