

Musings of a Reluctant Entrepreneur

Life would be a whole lot easier if I could just 'chill out' more. So I understand from the laments of my long suffering wife and from my three adult children (who relish 'sending me up' whenever they can!)

But, deep within, there's an entrepreneurial spirit which is compelling and which causes me to press on with its mantra of 'being different and making a difference'. This is my heart beat.

I have entrepreneurial drive to achieve and I enjoy the challenge of achieving against the odds. The sense of achievement to benefit others as well as myself gives me deep personal satisfaction in the journey that is life.

Entrepreneurs typically see or make an opportunity for themselves, grab it and try to do something that is new, different and better. Yep, I do this to some degree or another but, as an entrepreneur, I struggle to go 'The Full Monty"! You see, I'm not your archetypical entrepreneur. I'm more of a reluctant entrepreneur.

I'm a simple fellow who wants an uncomplicated life. I love my red wine, cheeses, sunsets at the beach, oil painting and slabs of vegemite. Family first, work and team second. I tend toward diffidence. I am purpose driven and not ego driven. I feel inadequate more than invincible. I am tentative more than categorically certain. I disavow cavalier attitude and reckless action. I like to be trustworthy, concerned and caring.

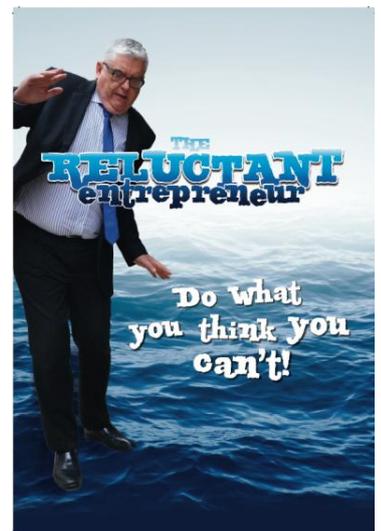
I understand my own weaknesses and do my best to ensure no-one knows what they are. I have an aversion to bankruptcy. My accountant worries me and I'm very wary of my banker. Debt is a 4 letter word. I don't wanna 'crash through or burn' or be 'way out there'. I loved my grandma and I don't wanna crawl over her grave. I'm wholly disinterested in chasing dollars, building an empire, enjoying an extravagant lifestyle or going to jail. People, their needs and community benefit matter first.

As an entrepreneur, I have not been born readymade. Entrepreneurship is not part of my DNA. In spite of myself, I seem to have acquired certain traits that are common to entrepreneurs. With me, these traits have been caught more than taught. They have been accidentally or intentionally acquired over time or have been pressed upon me by life's exigencies.

What are these traits? Why me?

- **Why do I keep getting all these terrific ideas tumbling around when I know they mean hard work and extra demands?**

Well, I guess it's just because I get excited about possibilities and what overall benefit they might hold for others and for me.



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- ***Why do I have to keep knocking on that door of opportunity and hoping it doesn't slam in my face?***
Well, I guess it's just because I am intensely curious about discovering a better future.
- ***Why do I (usually) have more energy than an 'energizer bunny' when I really just deserve to be putting my feet up on a beach somewhere exotic?***
Well, I guess it's just because of this strong drive for achievement and an unrelenting desire to fulfill whatever might be my destiny in life and to do my bit to help others along in their lives.
- ***Why do I see uncertainty as a challenging milestone in my journey rather than a road block designed to stop certainty?***
Well, I guess it's just because I relish a challenge and certainty would take the fun out of solving the jigsaw puzzle that is life. I am curious and expectant about what's around the next bend in the road.
- ***Why must I keep taking calculated risks when there is never any guarantee of success?***
Well, risk is part of the adventure of life. Mind you, I'm definitely not one for jumping out of planes. Inside, my natural instinct is to be cautious and careful rather than cavalier or reckless. But, taking a calculated risk? I guess it's just because "you'll never never know if you never have a go" and "I've only got one shot at this life so I may as well give it my best shot".
- ***Why do I simply accept that failure is something I can learn from and that it is never an excuse for giving up?***
Well, I guess it's just because I've got my L plates on for the whole of my life and I want to keep learning and the taste of success will be so much sweeter when I have learnt to overcome and I think that if I gave up on one thing in my life then maybe I would give up totally.
- ***Why do I have to innovate when the status quo is just perfectly fine by so many?***
Well, I guess it's just because contentment with the status quo can lead to complacency and I want to discover better ways of doing stuff so that others can benefit from the new and the different and then I might make a difference in their lives. I just don't enjoy 'resting on my laurels'.
- ***Why do I remain optimistic when all the circumstances compel pessimism?***
Well, I guess it's just because I want to 'hang in' there, no matter what. I hate conceding defeat and I "don't want to ever let the bastards get me down".
- ***Why do I like to create and be creative?***
Well, I guess that creativity inspires others to look beyond the ordinary and mundane, and to dream a dream of something better and more life giving.
- ***Why do I need to fight and why must I get up after being knocked down?***
Well, I guess it's because I always want to be the last one standing and I choose never to give up or give in, no matter what. I simply choose a different path to get there or choose a new direction to explore.
- ***Why must I communicate effectively instead of sitting passively?***
Well, I guess it's just because I enjoy convincing people to accept my point of view, overcoming their skepticism and being a bit bossy (okay, a lot bossy, and I know perfectly well that I need to listen more and listen better!).
- ***Why do I feel compelled to influence other people?***
Well, it's because I know I need others to join me in our common cause. I know I can't be a solo act because of my own limitations. It's not all about me. I coach my team members to reach their full potential and to become entrepreneurs by being workers in an ideas factory. I encourage entrepreneurial and intreprenurial spirit to infuse our workplace so that we can constantly innovate as a team and enjoy the journey together toward our preferred future.
- ***Why do I always like to win at everything?***
Well, it's just because!!
PS I'm quite hurt that my family refuses to play board games with me anymore. They say it's something to do with their childhood.

Mmmmm so this is the sort of entrepreneur I am and why I think and act like I do. This is my heart beat. This is the entrepreneurial spirit deep within. In spite of myself, it is irresistible and compels me to 'be different and to make a difference' in my own 'neck of the woods' and among my own circle of influence. In doing so, my true delight is to benefit others and to contribute to the common good while greatly enjoying a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement for myself.

I guess all of this makes me the quintessential reluctant entrepreneur. Personally, I'm quite content with that.

Having absorbed my musings, the intriguing question for you, dear reader, is this: in terms of entrepreneurship, who are you?

And yes, I definitely need to 'chill out more'. To my family, I promise I will do so someday!

Cheers from the Reluctant Entrepreneur

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