



8 ways to keep your sanity on the gruelling journey of entrepreneurship

Description

1.

Take good care of numero uno

All entrepreneurship boils down to juggling two resources, time and money. They form the scarcity that if overcome even ideas limited in brilliance thrive into global empires. As an entrepreneur starting out, you often have to extract those resources from within, until you convince everyone else to invest in you, or you have enough of one to make up for a shortage in the other.

Unfortunately, through necessity most of us resort to extracting those resources from ourselves, we cut down on all we consider to be privileges to make time and money for our businesses. Cutting your gym membership will mean a little more time freed up in your day and an expense removed from the monthly budget, seems like a win on both fronts.

But that's seldom the case. A hard-working mind needs a strong well-taken care off body to house it. Without the yoga that helps you distress, without the whole foods that give you the nutrients your body needs, your mind is capable of less. Sacrifice is necessary, but you may need to consider what really counts as "privilege" when sacrificing for your business, because what you cut back could just be the support system you need to meet goals.

2.

Never lose sight of why you started

Change is inevitable, and failure to adapt is the fastest way to kill your business, but through your evolution, stay true to your roots. Chances are this venture was a pursuit of your passion, a way for you to share what you love with the world and make a little while doing it, and that's a recipe for success. But it's easy to lose sight of that noble goal in the noise of what this world demands of us.

Tough challenges force us to make tough choices and strip away fabrics of the identity that got us started, and somewhere along the line when the identity is completely lost, and the passion dies, it becomes easy to ask ourselves why we even started when the times get tough. That's why it is so important to hold on to that identity dearly.

Have a memento that grounds you to your origins always. Be it your first successful account, or that first review of a client whose life you changed, attach your identity to it, because circumstances may change and may necessitate change, but your identity should always be the same and in that identity lies the passion that got you started and will keep you going.

3.

Do it with the “squad”

Whatever structure you decide to adopt within your team, the relationships within should transcend the pretty organogram you drew on your business plan. Your team should build on one another, your team should be a family unit. Your team should have individuals you are looking forward to seeing after a long night of hacking away at a problem.

Because, in the early days, you are going to be spending a lot of time hacking at problems, you going to be spending a lot of time with these individuals, so the time you spend with them should be considered quality time to you, otherwise your sanity will definitely falter. It also assists in minimizing conflict and ensuring it is resolved swiftly, because spend enough time with a set group of people and definitely conflict is a definite by-product, but if you with the squad, it gets resolved faster than it arises.

Even in your own project, you are bound to be defeated and lose hope at some point, lose sight of the light at the end, but with the right team, the squad, the dream is shared, they will always be there to pick you up every time.

4.

Have a muse

We have said this before, and we stand by our assertion, “every set of trials you are facing on your entrepreneurial endeavour right now had to be overcome by one hero or another to be where there are today”. Some of your heroes may have faced all of the very same trials, and triumphed, or found a way around. No matter how unique you may think the circumstances are, you will come to learn “nothing is

new under the sun”.

So take time to not only learn from your heroes but draw inspiration from them as well. Invest yourself in their stories of how they persevered through the challenges, not the technical aspects only but the minor details of what kept them together, where they drew their strength, their energy, and at the end of the day even if you don't find the solution in those stories, you might just find the drive to continue looking.

It need not be a hero specific to business or entrepreneurship or an endeavour similar to the one you are undertaking, but a hero you can look up to. It need only be a story that emphasises the triumph of the human spirit over tribulation. And in that, you would have found a muse, a never drying well of inspiration you can consistently run back to replenish the energy necessary to conquer on a daily basis.

5.

Have chores you love

In business, there two sets of tasks that need accomplishing;

1. *The stuff you love, that you look forward to and smile when you think of doing*
2. *Everything else*

You can't avoid the "everything else", it's a natural part of entrepreneurship, especially in the starting days, but you need to balance it with the stuff you love. You can even do the stuff you love to take a break from the "everything else", now that's a powerful strategy. If you can't find something you are passionate about in your business, then maybe reconsider the endeavour.

A business you have no passion for or cannot find passion in is guaranteed not to succeed. But think of creative ways to encompass as much of your passions into your everyday. If you are a master at the hashtag, then maybe manage your own social media and find growth through there, or if words flow easily out of you, put up a blog, share your words, engage clients and grow your market, the aim is just to inject a little fun into what you do on a daily basis.

6.

Be spiritual

Going through *“the pale blue dot”* by Carl Segan, one gets less a sense of the insignificance of planet Earth and the human race, and more an appreciation of what lies out there, what is possible, just how much greater reality is than we choose to limit ourselves to believing. As a human, you have to believe in something greater. It could be God, it could be the force, but whatever it is, there must be some guiding force you believe in as opposed to the entire universe being a series of lucky events pushing an incalculable mess into a tangible creation.

That which you believe in, stay in touch with it. Pray, meditate, hold a ceremony, but stay in touch with your centre, and you will feel there is more control over what you are doing and the outcomes, and that goes a long way in restoring your calm. Even if you believe it's all luck, coincidence and happenstance, then believe that luck is in your favour, but whatever you do, believe.

7.

Take a break, often

There will always be twenty-four hours in a day, and you will always have a finite lifespan. There. We said it, now you can curl up in a ball and cry for a bit, it's a gruelling discovery. Now that you have faced reality, and had a little time to deal, time to accept you can never really “stretch time”, or “make time”. That little bit more you want to push **WILL** cost time and that time has to be slotted into that twenty-four hour day. Probably by cutting down on R&R.

You are not losing your grip on sanity, you are just exhausted. Because of the exhaustion, you are now less productive, and prone to mistakes, so now you are frustrated. All to push that “little bit more”, only to wake up and realise it was indeed a little bit, so now more anger and frustration.

We could go on with the cycle endlessly but it paints a clear picture. Instead, the sage route is to know your tasks beforehand, know your productive rate and plan for the tasks ahead of time, then hunker down and bring home the bacon. If you are honest with yourself, and the process, you will seldom be off schedule, even when you are it will not be by much, then you can take that well-deserved break, recharge, come back ready to conquer another set of tasks and move one step closer to the dream.

8.

Accept defeat

This is perhaps the most difficult phase of any entrepreneurial journey. It's like that break up where

nothing was wrong, but it just wasn't working. You love your business, you are committed, you put in the time, the work, the resources, but it's just not materialising to the potential you thought it had. There may be no adoption, the cash flows aren't turning positive, breakeven is elusive, the market is just not large enough or the competition is hammering you. You know all the scenarios.

If you haven't gone back to the drawing board to rethink the fundamentals, then you should try that, alter your approach, then circumstances may change, but if this is your tenth time on the drawing board, then it's time to accept that all bitter truth, the business is not working and you need to execute your exit strategy and salvage some resources, and a little bit of your sanity.

The likely reason you are finding it so difficult to withdraw from the venture is probably the feeling of failure that comes with winding up operations. But looking at it from that angle is a completely wrong approach. Entrepreneurship is a fluid journey, not marked by absolutes, that point is not a period but a comma. Salvage what you have, fork from your current route and your entrepreneurial story may still be one of success, but forcing the matter is a sure way of making sure you end up worse off than where you started.

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