

DARE

Life lessons from entrepreneurship



MIKKO.LOIKKANEN

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by Mikko Loikkanen

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To Aura, Riikka, Jarmo and Arto

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For the reader

Entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of society and its development, driving economic growth and prosperity at multiple levels. The role of public authorities is to create favourable conditions for entrepreneurs and businesses to operate in Finland. This also generates export trade, which is vital for the country's economy and general well-being.

Compared to many other countries, the Finnish business sector is distinguished by a high proportion of sole proprietorships and small businesses. These entrepreneurs operate with dedication day in, day out, often overlooked by the spotlight of major headlines. However, their impact should not be overlooked, as they are significant contributors to job creation. Encouragingly, an increasing number of young people are considering entrepreneurship as a viable career path.

Those considering entrepreneurship, as well as those who have previously been entrepreneurs, are likely to face similar questions and challenges. These include choosing an entrepreneurial career, developing a business idea and managing day-to-day operations. Drawing from my own experiences, this book explores these key themes. Rather than offering theoretical concepts or a single truth, it provides a genuine insight into the everyday life of a sole trader and small entrepreneur. The narratives are authentic, told from the author's perspective.

I have introduced and reflected on the themes of the book in courses designed for aspiring entrepreneurs. By sharing these experiences, my goal is to shed light on the realities of entrepreneurship and to offer perspectives for reflecting on one's own entrepreneurship. I hope that readers, whether studying or teaching entrepreneurship, consid-

ering starting a business or already running one, will find practical insights that support them in their endeavours.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the colleagues, partners, suppliers, customers and students I have met along the way who have enriched my life and my entrepreneurial journey.

Meilahti, Helsinki

October 2025

CHAPTER 1 – THE CALL TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

How do I become an entrepreneur?

Entrepreneurship isn't for everyone. The world's shortest commute from thought to action is simply too long for some. For others, living in uncertainty is a nightmare. Some find courage and risk-taking only in the pages of a dictionary. For others, the idea of selling themselves and their skills is terrifying. Not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur, and there is no shame in that.

Some people, I believe, are born to be entrepreneurs. They know from the start that sooner or later they will want to work for themselves and build a livelihood for their families through entrepreneurship. For others, entrepreneurship is a long-term dream that takes years to mature.

The final impetus to embark on the entrepreneurial journey can come from boredom with being a small cog in a large organisation or the monotony of routine work. For some, a unique opportunity or a change in life circumstances sparks the decision to start their own business. This may happen when an employer or familiar entrepreneur retires and offers the business for sale.

Children of entrepreneurial families are strongly influenced, either positively or negatively, by the model set before them, shaping their future career choices. Ideally, a generational change occurs when a successor comes from within the family or family line.

An internal entrepreneur, or *intrapreneur*, embodies an entrepreneurial mindset and approach within a company in the service of others or as part of a large organisation. They take responsibility for

their community, proactively seeking ways to drive development and improvement. If their initiatives are met with resistance rather than encouragement, they may ultimately choose to pursue their vision by launching their own company.

It isn't uncommon these days for individuals to find themselves in a state of exile. As the business landscape evolves, companies are outsourcing support functions and, in the worst cases, resorting to layoffs. As a result, many people are forced to reluctantly give up their jobs and are left wondering how they will sustain their livelihood in the future. For some, there is no alternative to self-employment, either due to the nature of their profession or because of the difficulty of finding employment. In such cases, cooperative membership, franchising or light entrepreneurship can lower the threshold to entrepreneurship, providing a less risky path to starting a business.

The most ideal example is that of Moses' mother, as described in the Old Testament (Exodus 1–2).

Moses was born in Egypt to Jewish parents at a time when the Hebrew population was growing so rapidly that they were perceived as a threat to the native Egyptians. Pharaoh, who was unfamiliar with Egyptian and Jewish history, feared that the Hebrews would align with Egypt's enemies in the event of war. In response, he first subjected them to harsh slavery and later ordered the killing of all newborn Hebrew boys, having them thrown into the Nile. This was the fate that awaited Moses.

Moses' mother hid him for three months after his birth. When she could no longer keep him hidden, she made a reed basket, placed him inside and set it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. Moses' sister stayed nearby to see what would happen to him.

In the morning, Pharaoh's daughter came to the river to bathe. She noticed the basket among the reeds and had someone fetch it. When she opened it, she saw the baby crying and was moved with compassion.

Moses' sister approached Pharaoh's daughter and asked, "Shall I go and fetch a Hebrew woman to nurse the boy for you?"



More and more people are considering entrepreneurship as a career option. DARE vividly tells the story of one small entrepreneur. The book portrays the everyday life of an entrepreneur, the search for one's own path, growth, successes, and mistakes.

For the reader, the true-to-life narrative and the questions connected to each chapter provide practical insights and perspectives for reflecting on future or already launched business activities.

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