

## S U N D A Y

### **Be enterprising**

Unfortunately, dream jobs rarely come to those who sit and wait; the richest rewards can be claimed only by those who are willing to take charge of their own lives.

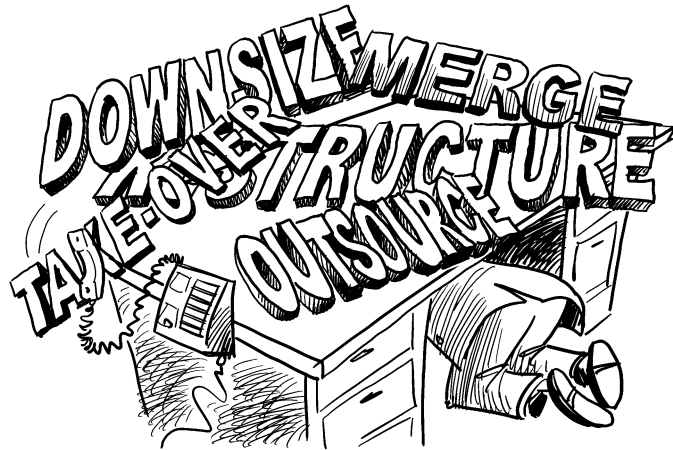
To make the most of the many priceless opportunities that wait to be discovered, it is important to get into the habit of thinking like an entrepreneur. This means taking personal responsibility for finding your goals, for learning and for adapting to changed circumstances. Today we are going to explore what it means to be enterprising.

#### **Why do you need to be enterprising?**

In the field of employment, many of us can now expect to face substantial change as an almost regular feature of our working lives. You could make a decision to change career. Your company could restructure, downsize, outsource, merge or be bought out at any time. All these initiatives will affect you – your responsibilities, your hours, your boss, even your place of work could change dramatically. Your job could disappear altogether.

A key skill in learning how to survive in this chaos is the ability to recognise and manage change before it takes control of you. If you can adopt the mind-set of an entrepreneur, you will take ownership of the organisation's goals more easily. You will be able to see the big picture rather than focus narrowly on your own job. Your employer will benefit because you will help the organisation to react more quickly to customers' demands. And you will benefit

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because you will cease to hold anyone else responsible for what you do or what happens to you. You will be able to look for opportunities to learn, to add value, to make improvements and to fulfil your dreams.

### What is an entrepreneur?

Being enterprising is about making your own opportunities. Is to do with getting your needs fulfilled and making the most of what is happening rather than becoming a victim of circumstances. An enterprising person is someone who:

- Displays initiative and solves problems creatively
- Is prepared to change before he or she is forced to by circumstances
- Is not defeated by failure
- Can recognise opportunities when they come along
- Is prepared to take risks

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The good news is that these skills and attitudes are not owned only by those who are lucky enough to be born with them – it is possible to learn to be enterprising.

*Finding some role models*

*'If I have seen further it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.'*

Sir Isaac Newton (1676)

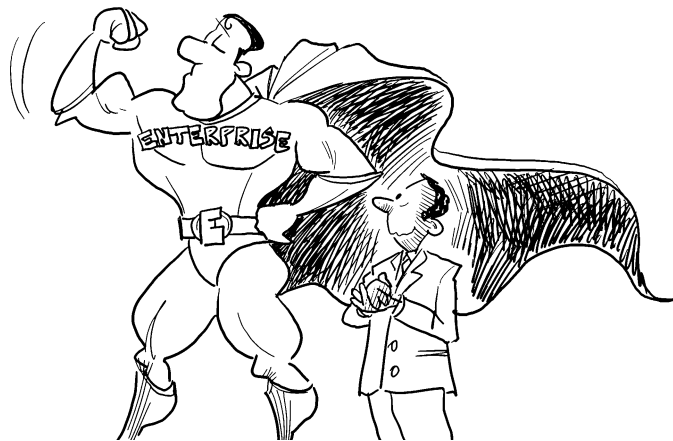
One way of developing the skills we need to achieve our goals is to identify one or more role models. If other people are succeeding at something that you would like to do, why struggle to discover the secret of success all by yourself? It is fascinating and fun to learn from other people's lives, and you can even learn a lot from their mistakes! One of my role models is Dawn, an ex-colleague who worked hard, made time to listen to everyone, laughed a lot and never gave up. Another is the Dalai Lama who teaches that there is no point in worrying, because nothing really matters anyway.

Potential role models are all around you. Your own may be famous people, living or dead, or they may be people you work with, friends, or even members of your own family. Analyse what it is that makes them enterprising. What sort of people are they? What have they done? Why have they been successful?

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Focusing on other people in this way can help you to see:

- What it is that makes people enterprising
- That enterprising people are not necessarily rich and famous
- That many rich and famous entrepreneurs started off as ordinary mortals
- That it is possible to have some enterprising characteristics without being wholly enterprising in every respect



*You are enterprising already . . .*

We all look at other people at times in our lives and think that they are somehow cleverer, more efficient, more skilled, more enterprising than we are. There is a tendency to believe that others have some magical qualities that we could never possess; qualities that bring them fulfilment, work, energy,

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power, success and so on. But if you stop to look closely at what it is that makes people enterprising, you will recognise that you also have some of the skills that they possess.

Look at this list of enterprising qualities and circle six that describe you.

<b>Bold</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Reliable</b>
<b>Confident</b>	<b>Resourceful</b>	<b>Communicative</b>
<b>Determined</b>	<b>Enthusiastic</b>	<b>Decisive</b>
<b>Persistent</b>	<b>Energetic</b>	<b>Adaptable</b>
<b>Creative</b>	<b>Committed</b>	<b>Adventurous</b>
<b>Innovative</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Conscientious</b>
<b>Active</b>	<b>Ambitious</b>	<b>Light-hearted</b>
<b>Inquisitive</b>	<b>Perceptive</b>	<b>Hard working</b>

Now think of times when you have shown that you have some of those qualities – either at work or in your private life. Try to come up with at least one example of a situation where you used them to achieve something you are proud of. ‘Success’ does not have to be something huge or important. You can give an example of a time when you used your inner resources in a small way.

I hope that this stocktake has made you realise that you already have some enterprising skills, or that there have been occasions when you have been enterprising, possibly without realising it. One of the reasons why you may not have noticed how enterprising you have been is that society places such enormous value on achieving success in terms of work or money. When enterprise is defined in these terms, many

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people may not recognise the times when they have acted with resourcefulness and enthusiasm. Modest, but heroic enterprises such as organising a self-help group or travelling overseas often remain undervalued.

Once you have recognised where your talents lie, the trick is to look for opportunities to use these skills in your working life. You are capable of getting more of what you want if you start by building on the positive qualities that you already possess.

**Confront your fear**

*'If the diver always thought of the shark, he would never lay hands on the pearl.'*

Sadi – Persian poet, 13<sup>th</sup> century

Fear is an enemy of enterprise. It sucks away at our confidence, weakens our resolve and prevents us from accomplishing what we want in our lives. But the quotation from Sadi tells us all we need know to combat fear. We can choose to try and reach the pearl, or live with regret forever. And the pain that arises from dissatisfaction or lack of fulfilment is often worse than the feeling of fear itself. Of course, evolution has provided us with fear because it stops us from jumping off cliffs or going too close to dangerous animals. But more often than not, there is nothing to fear but fear itself. To make progress we have to confront our fears and distinguish between genuine dangers and situations that we are capable of handling if only we had the confidence to do so.

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What are you afraid of? Going for a job interview? Speaking in public? Contacting someone you do not know? The truth is that most of your fears reflect your state of mind rather than anything in the external world. More often than not it comes down to a feeling of inadequacy or a dread of being rejected. If you can conquer these feelings, you can conquer the world.

Many people have found that the way to banish fear is to 'step outside the comfort zone'. This means gently pushing back the boundaries of what you feel you can do, stepping into the unfamiliar territory and staying there for a while until you feel comfortable again. You will be amazed at what you can accomplish when you make yourself do something which has always terrified you in the past. You do not have to parachute out of an aeroplane (not immediately anyway) – a simple thing like making a difficult phone call or speaking in public will make you feel confident enough to push back the boundaries a little more.



**S U N D A Y****Think positively**

Unfortunately fear has its own inexorable logic. What we fear frequently comes to pass – often because we make it do so. It follows though, that what we hope for can also happen. Getting out of the self-imposed prison of fear means retraining our thoughts. Do you ever hear a voice in your head that says ‘you can’t do that’ or ‘that will never work’ or ‘you are not good enough’? It would be surprising if you do not because this kind of voice is very strong in most human beings. It is how you react to this voice, whether you listen to it or tell it to be quiet, that makes the difference between success and failure.

The ability to be enterprising is generated by a sense of self-esteem. You will never be able to go after what you want if you really do not believe you deserve it. It follows that your ability to succeed is affected by your beliefs about yourself. For example, if you believe that you cannot use a computer, the result is that you will have difficulty in using a computer. An objective test may prove that you actually have an excellent capacity to learn how to use different computer applications, it is just that you have convinced yourself otherwise.

Our beliefs stem from our experience of life, and we tend to explain events in either a positive or negative way.

- A positive excuse for forgetting something might be ‘That’s not like me – I must be very absent-minded today’
- A negative excuse for adding some figures up wrongly would go something like ‘Trust me to blow it – I’m never any good with numbers’

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What happens is that the memory of our behaviour and how we felt on one occasion is carried forward to influence our future experience, either positively or negatively. Facts are not the issue – it is the way that we interpret the facts that dictates the extent of our success or failure in every part of our lives.

Do you tend to interpret your actions positively or negatively, on the whole?

- Note down at least three positive self-beliefs. Then give some examples of behaviour that has given rise to these beliefs
- Now list three self-defeating beliefs about yourself. Again, give an example of the sort of behaviour that supports this belief
- Finally, translate each of those self-defeating beliefs into a positive statement about yourself. Once more, find some evidence to support these statements

Here are some examples:

<b>Self-defeating beliefs</b>	<b>Positive self-beliefs</b>
I'm no good at sport.	I don't shine in team sports but I enjoy non-competitive activities like cycling and dancing.
I'm so unattractive.	I'm unique and I can make the most of what I have.
No one listens to me.	I find communication difficult but I'm getting better at it.

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I give up too easily. I must identify a goal that really motivates me – and tell myself that I deserve to achieve it.

Most of us have a mixture of self-beliefs, some of which are positive and 'empowering', while others are negative and 'disempowering'. It may be that you have low self-image in terms of the work you do. But you might also see yourself as being good at a hobby. The trick is to replace the negative beliefs that stop you getting where you want to go with positive beliefs that will help you to reach your goals.

### Coping with disappointment

*'Many of life's failures are people who didn't realise how close to success they were when they gave up.'*

Thomas Edison (1879)

No matter how clear your goals are, and how carefully you lay out your plans, there are going to be times when things do not work out as you hope. But if you can think like a successful entrepreneur you will be able to bounce back from any failure or disappointment. It is said that Thomas Edison spent \$40,000, and performed 1200 experiments before he succeeded in his ambition to invent a safe and inexpensive electric light bulb. It is simple mathematics really. You create more chances to score a goal if you can learn from experience and keep trying when you have failed.

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When you attempt something and it goes wrong, you may feel hurt, angry or just plain embarrassed. Your 'failure' could be anything – getting sacked, being turned down for a job or a contract, making a mistake or speaking out of turn. Unless you apply positive thinking, there is a real danger that you might slip into a slough of despondency, feeling that there is little point in carrying on. But do not be discouraged. Try to turn the failure into success by viewing the incident as a chance to learn.

Of course, it is not wrong to let off a bit of steam. It is quite normal to feel a sense of loss or frustration when disappointment occurs – especially if it was your fault. You may feel angry with yourself for making foolish mistakes. It is important to release these bad feelings so that you can move on. If possible talk about them to a friend or relative or write them down. You may like to do something physical, like swimming or running, to help you work off the negative emotions.

After that, the most important thing to do is to learn from the experience. Be brutally honest with yourself about what really happened. What went wrong? There are many reasons why you may have failed:

- Unrealistic goals
- Factors outside your control
- Making mistakes
- Insufficiently developed skills

Try to analyse the events and the behaviour that led to the failure and what you could have done differently. How can

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you make sure the same thing does not happen again? If it really was your fault, it is important to take responsibility and not blame others for the problem. Above all remember that you are only a 'failure' if you quit when things go wrong. When things do not work out as you planned, what happens is neither good nor bad, but merely information that will help you improve your plan next time around.

When you put the past behind you, your positive attitude will do much to shape what happens to you from here on in. Tell yourself that accidents happen or that everyone makes mistakes or misses deadlines from time to time. None of this makes you a loser. The trick is to demonstrate (to yourself and others) that you recognise what went wrong and are a better person as a result. It will make all the difference to act confidently and maybe even to see the funny side. The result will be that you will keep going long after others give up.

Many people say (in the light of experience) that the 'failure' was the best thing that ever happened to them. It could be a chance to review your career path or to identify what is standing between you and success. If you think positively you can turn almost every so-called failure to your advantage.

**Networking know-how**

Although being enterprising is about taking charge of one's own life, the world need not be a cold, friendless place for those who have decided to help themselves. Knowing how to use and expand your personal networks is an important element in your quest to become more enterprising. A

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network is a group of people who can help you to achieve your goals. Networking means building professional relationships with this group and staying in contact with them.

Research indicates that the people who advance their careers through personal contacts have greater job satisfaction and higher incomes than those who do not. And most people now recognise that one of the keys to being successful as a freelancer or an entrepreneur is to have a strong support network.

*Who is in your network?*

The great thing about a network is that you already have one, consisting of your:

- Relatives and friends
- Bank manager, solicitor and doctor
- Boss, co-workers and business contacts

These people can help you in a variety of ways. They can tell you about job opportunities, they can give you information about skills and courses, they can provide you with inside information about the industry you work in or they can simply provide you with support to help you progress. The way it works is that each person in your network has at least as many contacts as you, so you may have access to all kinds of different people without realising it. Try making a list of the people in your network and then consider what they can do for you. Do not forget that the internet is a fertile source of opportunities for networking.

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### Summary

Today you have been looking at what it means to be enterprising. You have seen that it all starts with you – how you regard yourself and what you believe you can do. Achieving what you want is only possible if you can think positively, confront your fears and cope with disappointment. It is also important to obtain greater access to ideas and business opportunities by making the extension of your support network a priority.