

Prepared for Enterprise and the Entrepreneur by Professor Gary Evans

Discussion topic:

Should you be an entrepreneur? Do you have what it takes?

This and the entrepreneurial survey are the first of the discussion documents prepared for Enterprise and the Entrepreneur. The intent here is to have you review these documents, sometimes written as straight prose, sometimes written in outline form in the name of brevity, as was this one. Come to class prepared to discuss these matters. In this case, do you think you have what it takes to be an entrepreneur? To answer that you need to know a little bit about what it takes.

Generally, I think that very few of the students who attend this college has what it takes to be an entrepreneur, or at least a successful entrepreneur. I *do* think, however, that you can learn more about what it takes and improve your odds. And I think Mudders are much more suited for entrepreneurship than the public at large. After all, we are talking about an undertaking that has a failure rate as high as 70% to 80% for all who make the attempt.

[Note: There is also a section about what it takes to invest in a startup, because I am asked questions about that often also].

These discussion *will not work* unless you take the preparation seriously. That means that you have to not just review or read this material, but to think about it as well!!

1) What it seems to take to be an entrepreneur

- a) A clear understanding of **risk** and the willingness to undertake risk.
- b) A willingness to be **responsible for** and **accountable for** the risk that has been undertaken by your investors.
- c) An understanding of **priorities** and the need to pursue and execute them in their proper order.
- d) The ability to **concentrate** (focus) on the tasks at hand and to **execute** those tasks in a controlled, resourceful, and timely way.
- e) A strong, **enthusiastic** and **passionate** belief in your **Koz**, whatever that happens to be.
- f) The willingness to **promote**, **pitch**, and **sell** non-stop.
- g) The willingness to absorb huge amounts of **stress**.
- h) Tenacity, relentless energy, a tolerance for long hours and **hard work**.
- i) **Control** over your emotions.
- j) A sense of **strategy** and planning.
- k) Flexibility and a sense of **tactics**.
- l) A true **team player**, possessing all of the skills necessary for working well with teams.
- m) The **ability to lead** and the **ability to accept leadership** from others.

- i) The ability to **motivate** and guide subordinates.
- ii) The ability to articulate and **communicate** visions, goals, ideals, and objectives.
- iii) The need to be **fair** and **honest** to all parties.
- iv) The ability to **delegate authority**.
- v) The ability to make clear decisions and to **execute** them or give orders for the execution of them.
- vi) The ability to be **responsible** rather than popular.
- vii) The ability to know when authority stops and when **responsibility begins**, especially to peers, investors, and directors.
- n) Strong **social aptitudes** and abilities, a good sense of **social grace**.
- o) A healthy and strong **respect** for business principles and practices.
- p) **Strong character: Courage, accountability, responsibility, honesty, and truthfulness.**
- q) ... and most of the attributes that are listed under **Attributes of a good CEO**, if not already covered here.

2) Possible personality, background, and environmental issues?

- a) Certain personality attributes?
 - i) e.g. introversion, shyness, being taciturn, anxious, etc.?
- b) Gender or race?
 - i) Are the probabilities of success lowered if you are a woman or under-represented minority?
- c) Education
 - i) Is formal education an aide, a liability, or neutral?
- d) Experience
 - i) Does prior business experience help?
 - ii) Is prior business experience absolutely necessary?
- e) Environment and background
 - i) Coming from a business family or strong business environment?
 - ii) Peer contact with other managers and entrepreneurs?