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Writing 205

Literature Review

Question: Does being happy, mindful, or enlighten help entrepreneur reach success in their career paths.

Entrepreneurship is the process of designing, launching and running a new business and those who attempt this challenge are called entrepreneurs. Often, entrepreneurs are most passionate and driven people you will ever meet however they can also be most obsessive and out balance individual you will ever meet. The stress and responsibilities that comes with entrepreneurship such as money and time can drive many to insanity or depression. When ask “How do you become successful”, Ellon Musk, founder of Telsa, SpaceX, and other companies replayed “Work like hell, I work 80 hours a week every week”. But yet very successful entrepreneur such as Arianna Huffington founder of Huffington Post, and Steve Jobs former CEO of apple have obtain a balance of work and personal life in their successful careers. On top of that, Huffington, and Jobs all share the commonality of practice mediation and mindfulness exercises and at same time have founded and build some of the most successful companies in the world. So my question is does being happy, mindful, or enlighten help entrepreneur reach success in their career paths.

Elon Musk, the literal poster boy for entrepreneur famously quoted that the key to success is to work like hell. In his book, **Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future**, he claims “Work like hell. I mean you just have to put in 80 to 100 hour weeks every week. [This] improves the odds of success. If other people are putting in 40 hour work weeks and you’re putting in 100 hour work weeks, then even if you’re doing the same thing you know that you will achieve in 4 months what it takes them a year to achieve.” Over the last year, Elon Musk has founded some of the biggest companies such as PayPal, Tesla, and SpaceX proudly working over 100 hours a week working 6 days a week from 8 am to 12 pm week after week. As this approach might work for Elon, it doesn’t work for many entrepreneurs.

With this much time in his work, it takes away from other things such as sleep, exercise or a social life. When I interviewed my dad, Li Rong Tang who is a fairly successful retired real estate owner, he shared that he followed Musk’s ideas when he was young and it didn’t bring him happiness or success in the long-term. He told me when he was young and was approached with a difficult problem, he would use his inner Elon and just throw more time at it. He claimed this might have worked in the beginning but as you become more successful, you are given more opportunity and you don’t have enough time in the day to continue Elon’s approach. As time went by, he retired because he made enough to be happy and spend time with my mom, my sister and I. But what I question is if my dad spent more time being mindful, would that have helped him in his entrepreneur’s pursuits. There are many entrepreneurs who are able to be very successful in their career and stay happy through their mindfulness practices.

In Arianna Huffington’s latest book, ***The Sleep Revolution: Transforming Your Life One Night at a Time***, she claims meditation makes her wiser and in turn more successful in her work. In her book, she reflected that meditation is a remainder “underneath all of coming and going,

successes and failures, there is a deeper dimension in our lives and we can tap into which makes more successful and compassionate and more of things we want in our lives”. In her words, Huffington shows by taking ten minutes in her day, she is able to stay in the present and reflect on herself to becoming a better CEO.

Furthermore, Steve Jobs another famous entrepreneur believes in meditation and mindfulness and often credits his success to Buddhist principles. What many don't know was that Steve wasn't a perfect successful entrepreneur, there was a time where he faced huge failures in his life. During the time, he was kicked out of his own company Apple, Steve Jobs was very depressed and he turned to Buddhism. In the book, **The Zen of Steve Jobs**, Jobs revealed with the help of friend a Buddhist monk, he used meditation, Zen, and Buddhism to help bounce back from his hardships and difficulties. While writing **Steve Jobs Autobiography**, Walter Isaacson asked Jobs “how does practice of meditation encourage you” and he replied "If you just sit and observe, you will see how restless your mind is, if you try to calm it, it only makes things worse, but over time it does calm, and when it does, there's room to hear more subtle things — that's when your intuition starts to blossom and you start to see things more clearly and be in the present more. Your mind just slows down, and you see a tremendous expanse in the moment. You see so much more than you could see before. It's a discipline; you have to practice it." Jobs is claiming through meditation; his mind was able to imagine he normally never can. Through meditation and Zen, Jobs was able to rise from his failure and become the man we all worship today.

In conclusion, being happy, mindful, or enlightened help entrepreneur reach success in their career paths. Clearly shown in both Huffington and Job's life, meditation and mindfulness played

a big part in both their personal and professional helping them become the best person they can be. Furthermore, it seems like in some cases such as my dad, mediation can even help other faced difficult challenges and help successfully develop their companies. In special cases Ellon, it seems he was able to reach greatness without being mindful but at same time what if he did, would he have become even greater than he is now.

Reference

L. Tang, personal communication, April 12, 2018

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