

Discussion Of Entrepreneurial Qualities

1. How do you usually react when you run into a problem?

- a. I'm not happy about it but I feel confident I can find a solution
- b. I throw up my hands and say why me?
- c. I see it as a challenge to overcome and an opportunity for growth

Overcoming Adversity

No matter how much you plan, how careful you are, how much you think things through before you take action in moving forward on your Solopreneur business dream, things you don't expect are going to happen. Bad things. For example, after building a business through a company that we were representatives for, that company changed their mind on marketing activities that they had previously given us permission to engage in. Activities that we had put a tremendous amount of time and effort into and were at the heart of our marketing success.

We then watched in disbelief as that company, through their actions, destroyed our business before our eyes. Will this happen to you? I don't know. But you have to be prepared to get some very bad news, think it's all over for you, absorb the blow, take some time to process it, then get back on your feet, make a new plan and keep moving forward towards your dream. It's not pleasant and it's not fair. But that's just the way it is sometimes.

2. On a day to day basis, I would mostly categorize my attitude as the following:

- a. Positive and motivated
- b. Mopey and worn out
- c. Resigned and content

Positive Attitude

This is one of the most important concepts you need to embrace and work on in order to be successful. The reason why is because having a positive attitude gives you a feeling of control and creates a sense of empowerment for yourself. Feeling empowered allows you to overcome obstacles and have the confidence to tackle difficult assignments.

When things go wrong, sometimes the only thing that will pull you out of the abyss and get you to move forward is the habit you have developed of keeping a positive attitude. It's easy to fall into negative thinking. Andy and I have both fallen victim to that. But we've also discovered that being negative doesn't feel good. It takes work to focus on being positive, but it's totally worth it because you become a much happier person.

If you doubt that this is important, just read a biography of a successful business person. You will see that they have dealt with multiple failures before they ever reached the success we are all familiar with. Without a positive attitude they never would have kept going.



3. How do you feel about learning?

- a. I am happy with the status quo
- b. I like to learn and am continually working to improve myself and my skills
- c. If I discover I need a new skill to implement my plan, I am willing to learn it

Learning

Learning is a lifelong process for a Solopreneur. Fortunately, the learning is different from what Andy and I both did back in college which was a lengthy process of sitting in a classroom, regurgitating back what we had memorized on tests, and oftentimes having to take classes that really didn't matter. The learning you do as a Solopreneur could be described as a la carte. For example, you choose to learn a new technical skill which will help you advance your business, or you choose to study mind development which will help you with your leadership skills.

With every business we have been involved with there has been new learning of some kind, some of it frustrating and technical. But at least we knew that what we were learning directly applied to making our business work. For example, when we realized that we would need to learn how to do Facebook advertising in order to be able to talk intelligently to someone we hired, we groaned. But we dove in and ended up learning all sorts of fascinating details that allowed us to be efficient and save money. That's the satisfaction of being able to choose what you learn.

As long as you have a willingness to learn, seeing it as a gift you give yourself to reach your full potential, then you have a good chance of succeeding.



4. When you are faced with an important decision, what do you do?

- a. I tend to make an immediate judgment and decision without careful consideration
- b. I give myself 24-48 hours to ponder it, consider the possible options and their consequences, then make my decision
- c. I put it off until later

Decision Making

The most important advice we can give you regarding decision making is to not be spontaneous and overly emotional about it. Deciding to do something when you are amped up with excitement or feeling pressured by someone is not wise. You are likely to regret your decision later. It is best to take at least a day or two to think about it, come up with questions you need answered, consider the possible consequences of the decision, both positive and negative, and then make your decision.

We can remember “way back when” going to a business opportunity meeting, getting all excited because of the dynamic speaker, and immediately signing up to purchase an expensive business package which we later regretted.

I can also remember going to a 3 day business conference in another state and at the end of it being offered the chance to purchase tickets for next year’s conference at a really good discount. But you had to do it shortly. I bought the tickets and we ended up not going the next year, and the money was wasted.

I’m sure you’ve all experienced this in personal life as well. For example, a friend invites you to go to Hawaii with them because they have free hotel accommodations. You’re both excited and you immediately say yes. Then later, you look at your schedule and the cost of airfare, and wish you hadn’t, but you’ve already made the commitment.



5. How would you characterize your ability to accomplish tasks?

- a. I am disciplined and methodical
- b. I don't have an exact plan but I manage to get things done
- c. I tend to be scattered

Discipline

Having the freedom to schedule your time is one of the advantages of having your own business. This can allow you to go to your kid's soccer game or attend your favorite exercise class in the morning. But along with that comes the responsibility of making sure that you are putting in enough work hours, especially during your most productive times of the day. This requires discipline.

I remember when I used to go to my Jazzercise class in the mornings. I loved that! However, by the time I got home, showered and ate, I was sleepy and ready for a nap. Sometimes I wouldn't get to work until midafternoon, forfeiting my most productive morning work hours. One day I decided to look into finding a place that had those classes at the end of the day. I switched locations and started going at 5:30 p.m. This allowed me to work all day, and ironically, my exercise class became a sort of reward at the end of the day. What a difference this change made in my productivity!!!

You need to think creatively to come up with a productive plan that still gives you the freedom to do the things you love. Studying time management is something you can do to develop a plan and the discipline you need. We have an old classic Brian Tracy CD series called How To Master Your Time that is excellent. Time management never goes out of style!



6. How willing are you to spend money investing in starting a home business?

- a. I hesitate to spend money towards a new business if I can't see an immediate income coming from it
- b. I have no extra money to start a business, I live paycheck to paycheck
- c. I have money saved, and understand that starting a new business requires investment

Money Mindset

Starting a business usually requires up front money. It can be as little as \$35 to sign up as a representative to a \$30,000 fee for buying into a franchise. The ideal situation would be to know in advance exactly how and when your income will cover and surpass the money needed to get the business started but this is usually not possible. The unfortunate reality is your business will likely cost you more than you think before it becomes profitable.

There are also the ongoing costs of monthly and/or yearly services that provide an infrastructure for the business. These must be paid regardless of whether your income can pay for them.

Finally, there are the costs of training to learn new skills that will help you make the business a success. All of these things cost money and pose a risk from which you may not recoup your investment. Businesses fail, lots of them.

We remember when we built a website for a woman who used the equity in her home to finance a retail candy store. She had been profitable by making candy in an outbuilding at home, but her dream was to have a storefront. She put a ton of work into her endeavor but in the end she lost \$200,000, ouch!



Being realistic means knowing what you can afford to lose. Don't jump into something without carefully weighing the risks. If you have to start small and build from there, it's better than starting big and losing everything.



7. When a person in a position of authority says something you question, do you...

- a. look for proof from other sources to verify that what the person says is true
- b. take their word for it
- c. investigate thoroughly and come up with your own answers and conclusions

Self Confidence

The reason that we chose questioning a person of authority to test your level of self-confidence is because of how important it is to trust in yourself and your instincts. We have hired people who were supposedly experts only to find out that they were lacking in skills they claimed to have. By questioning them we were able to change course and save ourselves some money. Never underestimate the power of your own perceptions.

You've probably run into a person who appears extremely confident, almost to the point of arrogance. This person is not actually self-confident. What they are doing is compensating for their feelings of insecurity by seeking approval from others through their overly confident behavior.

Self-confidence is often learned over time and through experiences so be patient with developing it. Trust in your impressions and honor your uniqueness. You have something special to offer the world. A confident person is able to view others as separate from themselves. For example, if a person appears to have a disdainful or aggressive attitude towards you, it probably isn't related to you. They may just be thinking about their own worries.



8. If something takes longer to achieve than you expected, what are your thoughts?

- a. I feel frustrated and angry
- b. That's the way of the universe... it's actually a blessing when things go according to plan
- c. I inwardly groan, then go about the business of making my goal happen

Determination & Perseverance

These are the most important qualities to have for solopreneur success! Disappointment is a common occurrence in life and particularly in business. How you handle it makes a huge difference in whether you will achieve your goals. You can count on things not going according to plan. In fact, you may think that the universe is conspiring against you to keep you from achieving your plan. Without determination and perseverance you just won't make it. If you're like a fighter who gets knocked down, but then struggles to get back up, you've already won the fight. This is the attitude you need to cultivate. And when you finally do succeed, it's so much sweeter because of what you've been through to make it happen.

We remember when we finished our first product and were happy that we got to shift to the marketing phase of our business. We bought an amazing course from one of the top marketers on the internet and immersed ourselves into it. We were very grateful for the information we were learning, but one of the recommendations was to create bonuses for our product that were not like the typical ones you see in an offer. They needed to be robust, and there should be enough of them so that we could later give a few unadvertised ones to the customers who bought our product. Yikes! A ton of more work! But we dove in to make it happen.



9. When you have to do something that makes you afraid, how do you handle it?

- a. I coach myself by asking what is the worst thing that could happen, come to terms with that, then dive right in and do it afraid
- b. I struggle with the fear for a few days, then make myself do it to get it over with
- c. I procrastinate indefinitely

Dealing With Fear

Extensive study done for a hundred years on the science of humans and human behavior has proven something very interesting. It's that humans are born with only 2 instinctive fears. They are the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. What this means is that all other fears that humans have are learned fears. In other words, learned behavior. And that means if they have been learned, they can be un-learned. So, if you have fears and other similar emotions on the subject of having a business of your own, virtually all those fears are ones you have learned. And that means you can un-learn them through the right kind of personal and professional development training.

I remember when I was doing cold calling to get clients to build websites for. I'd put a sign on my door that said "quiet please, making calls," close the door to my office, shudder, take a few deep breaths, and get it done. I had a friend who had a saying "do it afraid." Sometimes that is the best advice for dealing with fear. Once I got warmed up by talking to a few people, I was fine. Another strategy that works for me is to picture the worst that can happen, be okay with it, then proceed.

One resource we recommend to help you un-learn limiting values, beliefs, and associations that are holding you back is the Tony Robbins' Personal Power 30 Day Program where he teaches you Neuro Associative Conditioning. We've both been through this course and have found it invaluable in retraining our minds.



10. How would you describe your business ability?

- a. I'm used to working as an employee and am fearful of starting my own business
- b. I'm a big ideas person with a college degree and a career in business
- c. I'm a details person with a strong desire for independence

Business Ability

Surprisingly, in our experience, having a strong background in business is not necessarily needed to become a successful home business solopreneur. The reason is because every business requires different skills, many of which are not learned from a college degree or a career in business.

What does matter is having certain useful skills that you were either born with that resulted in you being attracted to business, or that you may have learned on the job in the past. Examples of these skills would include being comfortable working with numbers, the ability to talk easily with people, and being organized with an attention to detail.

Although Andy and I both have college degrees in business, we have found that most of what contributed to our success was new learning. For example, we purchased internet marketing courses in sales funnels and product launches, we have subscribed to monthly internet marketing education platforms, and we've bought training courses in various social media advertising like YouTube and Facebook. And, of course, don't forget personal development training. I will never forget the time Andy convinced me to go with him to a Tony Robbins weekend where I ended up walking on hot coals (and only got one small blister on the arch of my foot).

So, whether you are an experienced business person or a person new to business, know that you will have to learn and develop new abilities to make a success of the home business you choose.



11. When you're in a group work setting, how do you act?

- a. I prefer to observe, waiting to be questioned or called upon
- b. I enjoy participating and offering suggestions
- c. I'm comfortable leading the group

Leadership

Some people seem to be born natural leaders, but fortunately leadership can also be learned. Regardless of how you develop leadership, it is a necessary quality to have when you own a business. You need it to teach people, possibly as a coach within your own product. You need it to delegate tasks, interview and hire outside services, and supervise the execution of those tasks to your satisfaction. You need it to communicate effectively so that people who you work with respect what you say.

Leadership goes hand in hand with self-confidence. The more confident you are, the more likely people will see you as a leader. Leadership can be learned by doing. I remember when I decided to start a women's group. I was afraid that people wouldn't like me or wouldn't like the way I handled the group. I questioned whether I would be a good leader since I am somewhat of an introvert by nature. It was terrifying at first, but I was committed, and every week I learned something new. I found out how important it was to allow people to give their feedback even when it was painfully negative and unreasonable. They needed me to listen so that they felt they had a voice in what was happening. Ironically, I led that meeting for almost 9 years. And I ended up being a much stronger woman and leader as a result.



12. How do you feel about computers and technology?

- a. Although I wasn't raised with computers, I've learned out of necessity, and feel confident I can figure out new software
- b. I've been exposed to computers since I was young and feel very comfortable with them
- c. I'm an old schooler, and avoid computers when possible

Computers & Technology

Even if your home business involves you being out in the field every day like a plumber, for example, you will need computers and technology to handle your bookkeeping, taxes, payments, and using GPS to find the locations of your new clients.

If you choose to do an online business, you will really need to embrace computers and technology. You don't need to understand how the hardware components work because you can hire a computer tech person to take care of that part of your business like we do, but you do need to be able to learn new software that's within your capability. Knowing when to do it yourself and when to hand it off to someone else is part of the learning process. You may go through a lot of stress and aggravation before you realize you need to hire a developer to handle an application that is just too difficult.

Using computers means accepting frustration. A program doesn't work like you hoped it would, hard drives wear out and crash, software updates require you to constantly adapt. Fortunately, practice makes it easier. The more you deal with computers, the better you get at figuring it out. We can remember when we bought our first smart phones, not necessarily because we were excited about them, but because so many people were starting to use them. And we needed to know how our target market was using smart phones so that we could be more effective when interacting with our prospects. Of course, now, we can't imagine life without them.



13. A home based office has plenty of distractions. How do you think you will handle this?

- a. I constantly check my email
- b. I allow some interruptions but only if they are important
- c. I strictly schedule my working hours and let others know when I am or am not available

Counteracting Distractions

It's wonderful to work at home but it's also in the midst of children, pets, phones ringing, food readily available in the kitchen, UPS ringing the doorbell, etc. Use your imagination!

The only way you are going to survive all these distractions and get the important work done is to create a plan and schedule your hours. Your plan should include letting others know when you are not available, perhaps even having a sitter for your children during crucial work hours. People will adjust if you stick to your plan. For example, I do the work that requires the most brain power in the morning, like creative writing. When my office door is closed, my husband knows that I don't want to be disturbed, and it also keeps my cat from wandering in looking for affection.

I learned about productivity from a person who schedules their home working hours to be as strict as only taking calls on Monday and Thursday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. Of course, that person is extremely successful. The first step is awareness of what is distracting you and thinking up ways to remove it. For example, I found that my phones were always ringing in my office (I have 3 numbers). Shutting the ringers off or putting them in the other room makes a much quieter place for me to concentrate.



14. How willing are you to speak into a microphone or appear in video?

- a. The thought of it gives me the heebie jeebies
- b. I'm used to being in front of people and don't see it as a problem
- c. I'm willing to give it a try although I may be fearful at first

Microphone & Video

Owning a business means making sales which means marketing. Marketing oftentimes requires you to put yourself out there for your prospects and customers to see. They want to know who you are if you are going to inspire them. So unless you are a behind the scenes ecommerce guru, you will likely have to talk into a microphone and show yourself in video.

Most of us have our hang-ups about how we look, but you have to realize that people don't want you to be perfect, they just want you to be real. In fact, the more you appear to be like them, the more rapport you will create with them. And, like so many other things in business, the more you do it, the better you get at it.

We can both remember some of the first videos we did, working so hard at it, thinking they were pretty good, then looking at them years later and laughing at ourselves. It will feel extremely awkward at first because it's hard to be natural when you're talking into a microphone or looking into the eye of a camera lens. And audio tends to sound flat when you talk in your normal voice so you have to amplify your enthusiasm when recording. We even have a term for it called "finding your voice" because only with practice did we discover what works.



Then there is the technical aspect which can get quite complicated when deciding what equipment to buy, learning how to edit, getting the lighting right, figuring out problems with computers. The only way we got through all of this was to accept that the business we have chosen, which allows us to work at home in a very efficient business model, requires this of us, and we overcame the challenges a step at a time.



15. When life feels completely overwhelming with too much to do, how do you handle it?

- a. I feel stressed, then think about whether I might need to work some nights or weekends to get it all done
- b. I feel incapacitated and seek escape
- c. I figure it means that I'm making progress in many areas of my life, and I prioritize my tasks

Handling Overwhelm

By starting your own business you are almost guaranteed to experience overwhelm. There is just so much to do and there is only one of you. Sometimes feeling overwhelmed can be a good sign. For example, your business is creating more customers than you can comfortably take care of. At that point you may be able to hire help to handle routine requests and alleviate some of your burden.

But sometimes your personal and business life combined can just have too much going on, leaving you feeling stressed and deficient in all areas. Prioritizing may help. I'm a big list maker. I take everything I can think of that has been rattling around in my brain and write it down on paper. Then I prioritize my lists for both business and personal. Even though I haven't checked anything off the lists yet, I feel better just having organized my tasks.

But here's an even more amazing and valuable tip for handling overwhelm that you never hear people talk about. And that is setting posteriorities. How does this work? Here's an example. We all know what it's like to have something dangled in front of you that sounds like something you just can't refuse, like a friend wanting to schedule a hike with you, a business peer recommending you be a speaker on a podcast, a birthday party for a good friend. The most dangerous are the ones that require a regular ongoing commitment or are far enough out in the future that your schedule is wide open.



Now there's nothing wrong with accepting any of these invitations. The problem is that there are only so many hours in the day and if you agree to do something that requires a time commitment, unless you have plenty of time to spare, you are going to start feeling stressed out when it's time to meet your obligation. This is where setting posteriorities can help you keep your life in balance. For every new thing that you agree to take on, you must eliminate something that requires the same amount of time. So, for example, if you agree to attend the birthday party of your good friend, you also decide to cancel going to the monthly meeting of your garden club. This way, you aren't continually taking on new things and then realizing too late that you're overbooked and stressed out.

