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Entrepreneurship: Do You Qualify For The Ride of Your Life? The 8 Point Test

I recently received an email from a young executive in Mali, Africa in response to an article I'd written for *Forbes*. She asked, from a land far away, "Can everyone be a successful business builder? Is it a realistic notion?"

"Surely not everyone can succeed at this most difficult endeavor," she wrote. "Why do some flourish and others fail? Clearly, the odds of high achievement are challenging."

I liken award winners to a ride in a Supersonic F-16 jet fighter. A few years ago, the U.S. Air Force invited my daughter Megan to fly in one of the Thunder Bird's magnificent aircraft in the clear blue skies high over the Wasatch Mountains. The invitation was a dream come true. It was an experience she had hoped to realize. Only a few months before, she had made a tandem parachute jump from a plane at 15,000 feet.

She began her adventure early one summer morning at a nearby airbase with an orientation and several hours of instruction on high-speed air travel and its associated risks. Afterwards she received a pressurized flight suit, appropriate footwear and a high tech helmet.

Once on the tarmac, she climbed aboard the sleek fighter and took her seat behind the pilot. There was a highly skilled support team for the pilot and aircraft nearby. She waved enthusiastically to the cheers of family and friends as the plane moved slowly to the end of the runway. Along with others, I waited patiently for the journey to begin. We were told by the base commander the flight would last about 30 minutes at speeds of up to 700



My daughter Megan at Hill Air Force Base in Utah, on the day she took the ride of her life.

mph and that she'd experience up to 9 times the pull of gravity.

Just then, we heard the deafening roar of the jet engine as the aircraft took off. The pilot flew twenty feet above the ground, it seemed, so we could see Megan in all her glory. Then, picking up speed, he turned the aircraft straight up, reaching an altitude of 40,000 feet, so high we could no longer see the silver plane with our eyes. Over the next half hour, the pilot took Megan on the ride of her life as they flew straight toward the horizon. At some moments the plane was upside down. At times it rolled right, then left.

According to the pilot, the plan would include a barrel roll before landing. Just prior to the last maneuver, however, the base commander said there would be a change in plans. The giddy passenger wasn't feeling well. Apparently during this amusement ride from Hades, Megan had lost her lunch several times on various of the very steeply banked turns.

At touchdown, the boisterous cheers of the spectators welcomed her home. It was several minutes before an exhausted and wearied aviator disembarked from her aircraft.

Once she was composed, I asked what she'd thought. "Dad, it was the most exhilarating experience of my life, but at the same time the most frightful," She said. "I will never forget the excitement and awe of flying so fast across the sky. There is nothing like it."

"Dad, would you like to take a ride?" "No way," I said. "I don't have the guts."

High speed flight and entrepreneurship have much in common. It's my belief the list below represents the personal attributes of high soaring entrepreneurs (as well as great pilots). These are as follows:



"Yes! I can't wait!"

1. Successful entrepreneurs have an overwhelming desire to succeed.

Without doubt, distinguished entrepreneurs have a passion to build a flourishing enterprise. They think about it constantly. They are obsessed with a dream and pursue it unflinchingly.

2. [Business](#) builders possess fortitude.

They are courageous and they exhibit true grit. They have an indomitable spirit that drives them to reach beyond themselves. They are fearless.

3. Award winning founders are willing and able to take a risk.

They understand the cost/ benefits of engaging in what's unknown. They have a peculiar faith to try, no matter the odds.

4. Successful entrepreneurs are highly resilient.

These individuals are flexible and can pivot as needed. They can stay motivated and fulfilled even with the deep lows and euphoric highs of starting and growing a fluctuating business.

5. They are persistent.

These overachievers never give up. They overcome every barrier. Quitting is not an option for them. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

6. They are prepared and have organized their efforts.

They can spend a sufficient amount of time marshaling the required resources to complete every task. They have the skills to carefully manage the components that lead to the achievement of goals.



"It's not too late to back out...." (No! Never!)

7. They have a clear and thoughtful plan.

Great entrepreneurs know what they want to achieve and a roadmap to follow. They have every detail carefully outlined and they have a precise checklist.

8. They enjoy support from others.

Successful founders have support from family, investors, vendors, employees and customers. They are able to nurture critical relationships with people who are willing to provide the assistance they need.

As you read this list of characteristics, can you answer yes to each point? If so, there is a very high chance that you, too, may be the next great innovator with a high flying business.

As to our reader's question – can everybody become an entrepreneur? No—not everyone is suited for the life of an entrepreneur. However, every business and every employee can benefit from increasing their entrepreneurial skills. Increasingly, entrepreneurial companies are becoming the lifeblood of our global economy, and are becoming a progressively greater source of new jobs. Wherever you fit best in this growing and evolving equation, I look forward to helping you to prepare. And I wish you the best in your own exhilarating journey.

Do you have stories to tell? Additional questions? Feel free to contact me through this column, through www.AlanEHall.com or via @AskAlanEHall.

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