

A person with long brown hair, wearing glasses, a brown scarf, and a black leather jacket, is shown from the back, looking out over a body of water under a hazy sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

ARE YOU A
PRISONER OF
YOUR OWN
BUSINESS AND
SUCCESS

*How to build a business without
getting burned out?*

KRISTINA ERCEGOVIC
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*As featured in my online course,
alive workshops and retreats*

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I. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is a way of life. It has even become a lifestyle.

No doubt it is popular.

It's about **freedom and happiness**. That is why we started everything in the first place, right?

Most entrepreneurs tell me, and I 've interviewed more than 700 of them in the past 7 years during my Business Café events, that if they knew exactly what they are getting themselves into they would have never started in the first place.

Entrepreneurship, like everything else in life, has its ups and downs. There is that excitement of us **adrenalin junkies** when we create something from scratch, but then there is the dark side to it, as well. There is sometimes even depression. There was at least one moment when most of us at least once thought – what the hell do I need this all for? What is the point? I could just f... everything off and go work for someone from 9 to 5 and detach my brain, and maybe I would be happier then.

Then we soon realise – hell no. We are **UNEMPLOYABLE. We just cannot stand working for anyone else. No matter what.**

So, along the way we encounter many problems in our entrepreneurial life.

We are lacking adequate knowledge, capital, contacts... so we make so many stupid mistakes.

However – **it is about WHO we become on our journey, not HOW MUCH money we make. That is what matters most. To be, become and stay human all the way.**

So, how can you build your business without getting burned out? AND be happy on the way. ALL the way. Because happiness is what are we after for?

First let's see what are business and entrepreneurship all about.

2. YOUR BUSINESS

What is the purpose of any business? To make money? No. Of course we should and must make money, but the sole purpose of business is to solve problems and add value. Money will follow, as a result of energy, actions and effort invested.

Your business i.e. entrepreneurship ideally is an expression of you.

Your unique talents packed into products and services you offer to your customers in order to give them value, to solve their problems.

Did you know? Research about what makes us happy showed – unfortunately only 10% of people love what they do for a living, and only 5% percent follow their passion.

When dying, the second most often thing people regret is not working what they wanted, not taking risks following their dreams.

So be yourself. *It is your life. Your business. Your rules. There is no rerun. This is it. Live your life. To the fullest.*

So how are we going to build your business?

- **By working ON instead of IN your business.**
- **But first for things to change YOU must change.**

So let's take a deeper look at who you really are, what do you want out of your business and life.

3. YOU

For things to change I must change.

It is easier to blame, criticize and complain, to ask your employees, suppliers, customers to change their “unreasonable behavior” but it is a long term better choice to take 100% responsibility because we cannot and must not change others. We can only change ourselves. You can only change yourself.

Let's think about basic stuff. Ask yourself...

Who am I?

Please do a short exercise on your own – answer these questions for yourself.

- If you really knew me you would know that I am...
- What makes me happy?
- What is our definition of success?
- What am I good at?
- What matters to me? What do I stand for in life?
- What is my WHY – why do I do what I do? It is said that people buy why we do something not what we do.

Setting goals – what do I want from life?

3 techniques I use most often:

- Bucket list
- Vision board
- 3 questions:
 - What do I want to experience
 - How do I want to grow
 - How do I want to contribute

Goals are nice to set but a possible trap we might fall into is thinking we are going to be happy when and only when we achieve them, which is proven bullshit. **The key is to be happy no matter what, no matter whether we achieve them or not and regardless of any circumstances we might face.**

The two most important ingredients for success in business are MINDSET and PEOPLE.

- MINDSET referring to the power of our thoughts and words – what do we believe in, words that we are saying to ourselves. Words are our most powerful weapon. Use them wisely. Be your own mother not step mom. Stop criticising yourself.!
- Next to mindset, I said PEOPLE are key to our success.

It is said we become the average of the 5 people we spend the most time with.

Who do you drink your coffee/tea with? What do you discuss and most importantly how do you feel after being with that person?

Please carefully select people around you. Choose who to lose. Find your tribe, those crazy people that will support your wildest dreams. Those people who will say – yes you can – and – why not. Find your tribe.

In the past 7 years of my entrepreneurial journey I've spread the brand called Business Café – an exclusive event for small entrepreneurs – through franchise in 7 countries. Hope you join us on www.businesscafe.info and all over the world.

On our road to success MISTAKES are inevitable. It is important to learn to deal with them so that we don't give up. Let's treat them as learning experience.

Also we must always remember that everything **happens for a reason.**

Unfortunately we see that reason backwards, not at the present moment when dealing with challenges and problems.

So surely we will all face difficulties along the way – the point is to realize what can we learn and what is good in a certain situation.

Also it is important never to forget – we are who we are because of our past, not despite of it. So remember to forgive yourself for everything. And if you still haven't – forgive everyone for everything.

Forgiveness and gratitude are the way to fulfillment which we all so long for. Happiness is temporary, what we truly want is inner fulfillment and this is the way.

So what are you grateful for?

I realised I wasn't going to be a perfect parent and that I am going to make a lot of mistakes. But I realised my job is to teach my son how to be independent and happy. Therefore before we go to sleep we always discuss what we are grateful for that day, since the age of 4.

Before getting into business stuff... One more thing!

Always remember – be/stay you – your way to success must be aligned with your values if you want to feel happy at the end and along the way. That is why I keep repeating BE HUMAN, STAY HUMAN. It is more important to be/stay human in business than how much money we make along the way.

And now it's time to do business! And yes, with profits. Lots of profits.

4. HOW TO START A BUSINESS – MOST POPULAR EXCUSES AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Ok, you have an idea or just a wish to someday be your own boss.

But...

This is when excuses come up.

I am not an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs are born.

Nope, they are made – entrepreneurship is something that can and must be learned. However it is like in sports: you have to have talent but it is 1% talent 99% hard work.

I don't have a great idea.

Maybe you don't need one.

Performance is far more important than the idea.

There are already so much in the world. All we have to do is only to do something BETTER, CHEAPER or WITH BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE.

Look for problems to solve. What bothers you bothers someone else too.

Solve that problem.

Transform the industry. Take a business model from one industry to the other and disrupt it. Change happens when new models are created.

But there is already something similar in the market.

Great, so they already did the hard work of promoting it and creating and educating the market. Being second, third, ..., in the market has its advantages too. The most important thing is to position yourself as the first choice for certain product or service in the minds of your customers. That's what counts.

I don't have time.

I love this one. Who does too? You don't find time, you make time for things that are important to you and you focus. And work hard. Why do so many mums during maternity leave start their businesses? You think they are rested and have time?

When is the best moment to start? I don't think I know enough now. First I have to do this-that, learn this-that.

True we all have to learn. Continuously. But the best time is always now. Timing is important but you will never feel ready. It is enough if you know 10%, you will learn the rest of it along the way.

Drop the perfectionism issue. It doesn't have to be perfect. 80% is enough. You are enough. Let the customers feedback shape your service and product. Give them a try.

I don't have the money.

How about selling to customers, crowdfunding, angel investors?

Enough bullshit and excuses. If you want to build your business let's do it.

What is your definition of success?

What are your values – what do you believe in – what do you stand for in life, what matters to you?

What is your WHY?

What is your vision?

What is your ideal client, ideal supplier, ideal employee?

I am not brave (enough).

Courage doesn't mean you are not afraid it just means you act in spite of your fear. So don't sit and wait until a moment of time comes when you will not be afraid because that time will never come.

What if I fail?

Let go of the need for other people's approval. Who cares what they think. The surest road to unhappiness is trying to please everybody.

If you fail – you will still be whole and complete. Don't compare yourself with anyone. Everyone has it's own lessons in life. Don't try to please everyone. You will have even more valuable experience. In average rich people fail 2.9 times before succeeding. **So failure IS a part of success. Unavoidable.** What you should do is surround yourself with your tribe. People who will support your wildest dreams. And be there when you fail to lift yourself up, tell you to continue. Because you will fail only and only if you give up.

What is more important than failure? This: there is only one life to live. You don't want to be one of those people regretting they failed to follow their heart and do what they really loved and wanted, right?

Whatever you do, don't take it personally, stay positive and never give up.

I am afraid, it is difficult to leave a safe paycheck.

You don't have a SAFE working place nor paycheck. You have a REGULAR paycheck but that is not the same. Someone somewhere, maybe even right now, while you are watching this, might decide your job is not necessary any more. It's called downsizing.

I don't know how to write a business plan.

There are people who do, there are free examples on the internet. It is more important to figure out your business model and make it profitable. WHO buys WHAT and WHY.

So, I'm sure you get it by now – **get out of your own way**. It's not even about you. Your business is bigger than you. You are your biggest obstacle. Just be yourself. Then you are the strongest. Find your strenghts and work on them even more – we usually make a mistake and try to improve in areas we are not good at. Sometimes we need to but don't forget to be yourself and be better every day.

Just start doing. You've done enough thinking for sure.

KRISTINA.

Hello dear Human. I'm Kristina. These are my nicknames in the business world: Inspiration, Serial Entrepreneur, Teacher and Superconnector (of small entrepreneurs). In the past 15 years of my entrepreneurial journey in SEE Europe I've built 3 and sold 2 companies and I spread the brand called Business Café – an exclusive event for small entrepreneurs, through franchise in 7 countries. I've written 3 books and enjoy mentoring and sharing. I burned out twice. So you don't have to.



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Be human. Do good. Make a difference.