

There I was, running from 8th Ave to Park Ave on the busy streets of Manhattan. I had no cash in my pocket, so catching a cab was not an option. My only mode of transportation was my own two feet. Why was I running in such a hurry? Well, I was approaching an opportunity of a life time and I was not about to be late, not even by a second. In just a few minutes, I was to meet with Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones. This could have easily been a Nike™ commercial, the way I was dodging taxis, baby carriages, and all pedestrians in my path. As I arrived at my destination, I checked my watch and saw that I had two minutes to spare. Gathering my thoughts, I asked myself, is this what being an entrepreneur is all about? How did I make it to this point?

Since a young age, I have been fascinated and intrigued by technology, music, and design. When I wasn't playing guitar in my punk rock band, I was glued to my computer screen learning anything and everything I could about how the internet worked. I saw the web as a very powerful tool that put everything at my finger tips. I wanted to learn how to create websites and taught myself the ins-and-outs of countless programs. By 12, I started producing websites for rock bands and quickly turned this hobby of mine into a business. As my capabilities and knowledge evolved, so did my venture.

My regular weapon of choice in this business: the keys. I mean, keyboard... the one attached to your personal computer. That may sound a bit geeky, which it is, but it's the honest truth. I even wear the glasses to prove it. My passion for design and technology became the vehicle that delivered me through the trenches of business and the music industry.

In 2003, I founded Ten Minute Media to take my skills to the next level and offer my clients creative design and innovative marketing. Our initial focus was to specialize in website development in the music and entertainment industry. Currently, our list of clientele includes Clear Channel, Warner Brothers, Capitol Music, SonyBMG, Universal, along with many other companies across the board. My portfolio is filled with websites for legends such as, Mick Jagger, Natalie Cole, and Bob Seger – interactive marketing tools for Eric Clapton, Josh Groban, and Lily Allen – and design work for chart-toppers System Of A Down and One Republic. In the past year, we've seen a great increase in demand for our services outside of our niche music market. Consequently, we have started to offer corporations a web presence that is unique and exciting to challenge their industry's status quo.

Until about a year ago, I had been operating my business off of my own intuition with no one to call upon in times of trials and tribulations. Reading books and attending seminars on business could only take me so far. At the rapid rate that my business was advancing, I needed someone with extensive experience to help with these business 'growing pains.' I needed a living, breathing mentor, so I began my search.

In May of 2007, I went to Boston to compete in the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards (GSEA) regional finals. At the time, I was a first-year student at a liberal, laissez-faire college in Amherst, MA. I felt like I had been living under a rock. In

Boston, I was presenting my company to the esteemed members of the Entrepreneurs Organization (EO). The panel of judges in Boston overflowed with suggestions, advice and perspective that I had previously never encountered. I saw this as a great opportunity to find a mentor, and it seemed that the EO members saw this as chance to help guide a young entrepreneur. In the weeks that followed, I met with a few of these EO members and soon after found the three that best understood my vision and could help me strengthen my business.

Having mentors that are successful in various fields, other than my own, provides me with an outsider's unbiased and dynamic perspective. This also creates a healthy and advantageous balance for a young entrepreneur to learn from. After coming to these conclusions I was led to a mentor from my own surrounding area of Springfield, MA. Seemingly, our businesses are very different but this is not important. What is important is that we share the same values and his experience in the socially responsible sector has inspired me to be an entrepreneur who is conscious of more than just balance sheets and profit margins. This being said, I have a few mentors with extremely diverse backgrounds. The afore mentioned adviser from Springfield, MA is on the forefront of social reasonability and ethical business, whereas one of my EO mentors is on the cutting-edge of technology and marketing strategy – this formula strikes an equilibrium that is beneficial to me.

For me, a mentor is not someone who I need to be in touch with on a regular basis and knows my every move. He or she is someone I can call upon anytime and receive honest and objective advice.

My own advice to young entrepreneurs is: know why you're in business. I've heard this numerous times and its truth is infinite. Align your business with your missions, values and goals. Are you in business just to make money, offer high quality services, fill a void, shake up the market place? Knowing why you do what you do will help you navigate through times of uncertainty, because you can always resort to your founding principles. You'll feel a lot happier and fulfilled going about business this way.

Find mentors early on in your entrepreneurial venture. Their abundant knowledge and honest concern will help guide you in the right direction. Ten Minute Media has a long way to go and there is no question that mentorship will continue to accelerate that process.

Seeing the positive impact that mentoring has had on me and my business, I've started to mentor young entrepreneurs from the inner cities of the greater Springfield, MA area. This allows me to share the knowledge I have gained from some of the best business people I know. Since my mentors helped me, I believe that it is my duty to do the same for others and connect with my community.

It is astounding to think about how becoming an entrepreneur changed my life. As I worked on websites from my bedroom at 12 years old, I never once imagined that this interest of mine would open numerous doors to a bright future. The truth is that

anyone who has drive and dedication, no matter their background, social or economic status, has the ability to become a successful entrepreneur. It is endearing to read stories about people from all over the world, of all ages, races, and ethnicities, finding their inner passion or interest and turning that into an enterprise that can single handedly change their life in a positive way and impact the people around them. Entrepreneurship is an ode to freedom and creativity. Don't get me wrong, there are many challenges in starting your own business - there are tremendous responsibilities and much personal sacrifice, but being an entrepreneur is one of the most rewarding things in life. It's gratifying to know that my creations are being viewed all around the world and knowing that I got to this point through pure diligence and determination.

Entrepreneurship is one of life's great equalizers. In a world of global inequality, the concept of people going from rags to riches gives us hope that we are capable of creating something extraordinary out of nothing.

As you finish reading my last sentence, I recommend that you put down this book and start the business that's been on your mind. Put your ideas to good use. Put down this book and get going!