

GO DO!

**For people who have always
wanted to start a business**

Jeremy Harbour

‘Jeremy Harbour totally changed the way I do business and the way I do life. I thought I knew a lot about how business worked, I thought I knew a lot about having a great lifestyle; until I learned the lessons contained in this book and completely jumped up several notches. If you’re starting out in business, or you’re wanting to up your game to the next level, grab this book and sit in the sun soaking up some really solid wisdom with some vitamin D.’

‘I’m lucky enough to have spent time with Jeremy on his boat and his sea side home. Every time we talk I say “that’s genius! you must put it into a book”. I’m no dummy, I’ve built successful businesses and travelled the world myself but when I spend time talking to Jeremy I can’t help feeling like a student learning from a wise teacher. Anyone who wants to be successful in business and in life would be mad not to read this book.’

Daniel Priestly, Entrepreneur and Author of *Become a Key Person of Influence*, danielpriestley@me.com

‘Jeremy ably dispels the myth that you need to invent something new to start your own business. People have made money selling bread for thousands of years, the successful ones just do it better.’

Nick Jenkins, Founder of Moonpig.com

‘Jeremy is a true entrepreneur. In his writings he shares his journey and we learn how he has always believed that life is what we make of it, never the victim, never seeking to be the hero, Jeremy has just been determined to be independently wealthy and rely on no one else. Is it possible to teach entrepreneurship? I believe it is with the right role models and realism of what it takes. This book takes the reader through that real, scary, joyful and ultimately rewarding journey into wealth.’

Penny Power, Founder of Ecademy and Digital Youth Academy

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CAPSTONE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you for buying my book. I heard that when Donald Trump's book was published he got sued for lots of money, so, for the avoidance of doubt, I've made it all up. I, therefore, can't accept any responsibility for anything negative that happens after listening to my advice. Of course if you go on to be hugely successful then I will humbly accept all the credit.

Sometimes life teaches you a lesson – I have learnt my fair share. If you don't get back up after being knocked down, then you didn't learn the lesson. I hope this book will give you a short cut past some of the painful lessons – but be ready to learn some of your own.

So many people have shaped my life it would be impossible to mention them all, but the real stars in my story are my family, in particular my Mum and Dad, Valerie and John Harbour. Without their support, advice and education over

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the years nothing would have been possible. Both of my grandmothers, Mabel (alive and kicking at 94 years old) and Freda (RIP), and my brother Ben have also helped me enormously on this journey. They say you can't choose your family, well, if I could I would choose this one.

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION

GO DO!

Warren Buffet was once asked how he could remember so much detail about thousands of stocks. His answer was ‘Well, you start at A . . .’.

Every journey starts with a single step. The question is when will you take yours?

So, your financial advisor tells you to put half your salary into a pension scheme, which you won't see until you're almost dead, in order to make sure you will not have to sell your home to pay for your upkeep in a nursing home . . . bloomin' marvellous!

What about the guy who just went past in the Aston Martin, or the guy on the yacht in Monaco Harbour? Are they just lucky? Did they inherit it? Are they smarter than you? Probably not.

When you look at the richest people in the world nowadays, in either *Forbes* or the *Sunday Times* rich list, you will see that the list is almost entirely dominated by non-inherited wealth; a very different story to that of 20 years ago. When I was growing up the richest man in the world was the Sultan of Brunei, who owed his fortune to a combination of

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inherited and massive oil wealth. Today, the top three richest people are a telecoms guy in Mexico, a computer guy and a stocks and shares guy. They all started from zero. They all started with a single step. They all started at A.

Not only among the very top few, but all the way through the sprawling middle classes, the same thing is apparent. The transfer of wealth from what Warren Buffet calls ‘the lucky sperm club’, the world of inherited wealth, to the new world meritocracy, or earned wealth, is truly striking. This transfer of wealth and power represents a massive evolution of opportunity.

So how do you get your fair share?

There are many people who have made their wealth through a staggering variety of sources, through art, music, divorce or winning the lottery, but by far and away the greatest wealth creator is business – entrepreneurship in all its colours and forms. If you are starting from zero and you want to create a great life, have fun and just maybe become wealthy, then entrepreneurship wins hands down. You may think the odds of winning the lottery are reasonable. They’re not. Most winners in life have to go out and do it for themselves.

What makes these entrepreneurs successful? To a great extent it is their self-belief that they can go and set up their own businesses and become a success. This self-belief isn’t innate; it needs to be nurtured and encouraged, and it must survive in the face of much doubt. Society in general does not encourage this sort of behaviour; it tries to convince you that you need a job. This is passively drummed into us all on television, at school, from our parents and in newspapers and magazines. A job trades time for money, and time is very

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much finite, so it is, unfortunately, very hard to win through employment. Those who *Go Do* find an alternative route through life, where success is suddenly in their own hands.

For me, entrepreneurship is not about money, it is about life, fulfilment, learning, evolution and being the best version of *YOU* that you can be. When people complain about work, they often lament the fact that they cannot afford to leave their job. That complaint is a tacit admission that they are doing something they don't want to do for money alone. I would argue that many people with jobs, on the corporate treadmill, far more so than entrepreneurs, are all about the money – they get no fulfilment or development, just (often meagre) financial reward. What a compromised existence. I can see why they are so quick to say entrepreneurs are all about greed and money. As the French say, *que s'accuse, j'accuse* – he who accuses me, I accuse!

I also think the fluidity and dynamism of business provides an amazing creative outlet. Humans need a means of artistic expression to really feel content with life, and what a great outlet starting and running your own business is. You are creating a living, breathing thing from nothing – something that will take on a life of its own, a totally fluid and ever-changing canvas, which, without your attention, will waste away. The problem solving, the daily variation in tasks, the highs and the lows are irreplaceable human experiences and cannot be pigeon holed as good or bad.

I wrote this book for the people who always talk about starting a business, taking their first step, but never get round to it. The procrastinators, kicking it into the long grass and

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saying ‘one day I would love to run my own business’. I want them to just Go Do.

It is not designed just as a way to encourage people to start their business – anyone can do that with a bit of motivational know-how – but also as a way to dispel the myths around what you need to start. I want to paint a picture of how life changing the experience can be, to such an extent that you will feel embarrassed by not finally getting on and doing it.

Remember that knowledge and ambition are nothing without action. What differentiates success and failure, by my definition of those words, in taking those first steps?

Family and security are important things, which can’t be underestimated, but none of us want to get into old age feeling mournful about a load of things we thought about doing. We owe ourselves something more than that – far better to go for it and have a rich tapestry of a life, full of adventure, and to know that you have been in the pursuit of happiness.

It is far better to regret things you did do than things you didn’t.

People feel a fear of failing in business, but surely it is better to fail in business and then try again than to fail in life, with no reruns? Think of bouncing your grandchild on your knee and telling them about your life. Did you do the same job for 40 years, have four weeks’ holiday a year and retire on a tiny pension; or did you grab life by the horns and give it a good shake, with a roller coaster of ups and downs, thrills

and excitement, anecdotes and adventures? My definition of failure would be to have nothing to tell that grandchild.

Others have a more cautious view of success and failure, and that is their right. I acknowledge that my definition might not be for everyone, but I want to ask you to come with me on a journey and, by reading this book, consider an alternative view.

Business and enterprise not only enrich the lives of the people involved, but impact on society itself, through employment, economic growth and philanthropy. Warren Buffet and Bill Gates have already given tens of billions of dollars to charity, and have committed to raise \$600 billion from the 400 richest people in the world.

Let's put that in perspective – \$600,000,000,000. The entire overseas aid and development budget for the UK in 2011 is £7.8 billion, or \$10 billion dollars. The UK has a very large aid budget in comparison to other countries and is sometimes domestically criticised for its generosity and the efficiency with which it distributes funds, but two entrepreneurs who built massive organisations are going to pump 60 times as much as one of the world's largest economies into solving problems like global poverty and disease in the third world. One could strongly argue that entrepreneurs will be very well equipped to really target that spending and get more bang for the buck than an average government can.

So entrepreneurship can literally change the world.

Without our entrepreneurs we would be lost – there would be no economy as we know it, product development and technology would be decades behind and not configured half

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so creatively as they are, and the problems of the future would look much more frightening without innovators to help find solutions. So we must really salute those who make the effort to make a difference, rather than plod through life as a passenger.

Don't assume for a moment that entrepreneurs like myself have got everything right, or that I am luckier or cleverer than you. We all learn by making mistakes, and the information you hold in your hands has taken me 20 years to distil. Hopefully this means I will be able to help you avoid some of the very expensive lessons I have encountered on my journey, ensuring that – even if you replace them with your own – you will definitely be one step ahead!

In my career I have shown that you do not need to go to university or have any capital to start a business. I certainly didn't have any money when I started. But I did have the drive and commitment to get started and, in this book, I'm going to show you why taking that first step and starting a business will be the best decision you'll ever take.

If, as a result of writing this book, I manage to get men and women to start their journeys for the benefit of the world, then I will have succeeded.

Life has a momentum, it has ruts. If you are not careful you can spend a long time in a rut, literally missing years of your life.

Please don't surrender to the momentum of mediocrity, and enjoy the book.

CHAPTER 1

GO ME!

So who am I and how did I get started? Well, entrepreneurship came as naturally to me as walking and talking; I had never really considered anything else.

I blame the parents. I was born into a household that valued independence, entrepreneurship and learning. I was born in England, in a tiny village in the north of the county of Dorset (Thomas Hardy wrote a lot about this area and it is sometimes referred to as Hardy country). Our house sat at the foot of Hambledon Hill in the beautiful Blackmore Vale and our nearest neighbour was my grandmother, down the road. As a kid you want to get out, escape, make your own way, but it's a truism that you only truly appreciate the beauty of your roots when you go back in later life. My father was a farmer and my mother ran a beauty salon, initially from home and later in a purpose-built salon. For my part I adored growing up on a farm – running around playing with power tools, setting fire to myself and eating all sorts of things that should not be eaten. I am sure that is why I have such a good immune system now.

The greatest thing I learned, looking back, was the independence of life – the fact you can pretty much do what you want and only you can fully judge yourself and your actions.

In a house where one or both parents work, it's too easy to conclude that the choices ahead of you are limited to working for a corporation or for the government, whether as a civil servant, in the armed forces or for the state. But I was encouraged to believe that if I wanted to be an artist or a businessman, or pretty much anything I wanted, I just had to choose. I felt that opportunity was always close by. With farming being so seasonal, my father was always dreaming and scheming. We would talk about business ideas over breakfast and I would help him launch these sideline exploits over the years.

Unfortunately, I didn't get pocket money, but I look back at this as a great lesson itself; rather than getting hand outs, I was offered the chance to work for my parents in either business for £1 an hour.

My parents gave me lots of encouragement. Noticing that old ladies liked tea, I launched an early venture selling tea bags to the members of my granny's sewing club. It was a market waiting to be exploited. My mum's regular visits to wholesalers to buy supplies for the salon gave me the opportunity to buy tea in bulk and break it down into smaller lots. There wasn't a great margin to the business but I did make a profit.

Aged 11, I started cutting down the flowers from the garden, putting them in jam jars and selling them outside the salon to ladies coming to have treatments. This time my parents were less encouraging; decimating the garden didn't endear the business to them, so I had to call a premature halt to proceedings. However, my big hit came at Christmas, when my dad put me in charge of another sideline of his. We had

a small orchard where, a few years earlier, Dad had planted loads of Christmas trees. These had finally grown to full size, but with the farm taking up so much time, a 12-year-old Jeremy was put in charge. I was told to do whatever it took to sell as many as possible and I could keep half of the sale proceeds. So I placed an advert in the local paper, put a sign on the road and got selling; one price if they helped themselves, another if I had to saw it down and more again if they wanted it digging up. One great outlet was a local gypsy who bought ten at a time to sell door to door. My first indirect sales channel!

After a couple of weeks I had cleared £1600; a fortune for a 12 year old in the 1980s – and I think a surprise to my parents as well. The only slight annoyance was that a family decision was made to spend the money on a new TV and video that we could all share, so I never saw my half. Lesson learned? Get it in writing!

Life

Two major events, in hindsight, shaped me as a child.

Firstly, when I was aged about ten, my older brother Christopher died, suddenly and for no apparent reason. Nowadays they label it sudden adult death syndrome. I was taken to hospital and wired up to look for defects or arrhythmia, but nothing (that I know of . . . mum?) was found.

I seemed to go to a lot of funerals while I was growing up: both my grandfathers, a kid from school and my brother. My grandmother on my mum's side was one of 14 children, so there was a steady stream of great uncles slowly disappearing.