

# Coaching and Entrepreneurship

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More than anything else entrepreneurship is about high levels of sustained motivation. It is about the willingness to work hard and persevere—often overcoming major resistance and failure.

Entrepreneurship is about the ability and willingness to act quickly—taking advantages of a unique opportunity and not looking back. No regrets. These characteristics, in turn, require alignment between the enduring aspirations of the entrepreneur and the work being done. These enduring aspirations are founded in a dimension of human life known as the “career” which (as Edgar Schein notes) is the point of intersection between personal aspirations and organizational intentions.

## Entrepreneurship and Career Anchors

Each entrepreneur’s career is usually anchored in one or more specific cluster of values and behavior patterns. Schein identifies eight anchors or themes that are commonly found among all people who are motivated to work. He has shown that people will prioritize preferences for specific anchors. For example a person with a primary theme of Security/Stability will seek secure and stable employment over, say, employment that is challenging and riskier. People tend to stay anchored in one area and their career will echo this in many ways. Schein also suggests that when a person’s work is not aligned with their primary anchor(s), they often are not motivated to work hard and in a sustained manner—consequences which are antithetical to the performance of entrepreneurs.

While Schein makes very effective use of this “anchor” metaphor, I would propose that we need to consider two different types of “real” anchors and the differing ways in which these real anchors operate. The first type of anchor is the so-called *bottom anchor*. This is the large and very heavy anchor that most of us non-nautical folks envision. The bottom anchor consists of a shaft with two arms and flukes at one end and a stoke mounted at the other end (which digs into the floor of the sea or ocean bed once the boat begins to move and provides tension on the chains connecting the anchor to the boat). The second kind of anchor is called a *sea anchor* (also called a drift anchor or drogue). It typically is not as heavy as the bottom anchor and is often shaped like a parachute or cone with the larger end pointing in the direction of the boat’s movement. I propose that the second of these two types of anchors functions in a manner that more accurately typifies 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers than does the first type. While ground anchors keep a boat from moving very far from it mooring and use the sea floor as the base of resistance, the sea anchor is

primarily used to slow down (but not prevent) the drifting of the boat and is used to help orient the boat with regard to wind and tides.

In a parallel sense, I propose that 21<sup>st</sup> Century career anchors do not lock a motivated member of an organization in one particular place—rather it provides orientation and enables the member of an organization to avoid drifting too far “off course.” This metaphor may be particularly appropriate when applied to the fast moving, opportunistic entrepreneur. This person is likely to feel confined by a career anchor that is firmly attached to an unmoving floor. Given this suggested variation in Schein’s use of the career anchor metaphor, I would still support his characterization of eight fundamental anchors and propose in this article that we can apply seven of his eight anchors in our appreciation of entrepreneurship and the way in which we, as coaches, can be of greatest value to entrepreneurs.

I am leaving off the eighth anchor (Security/Stability) because it is most often antithetical to entrepreneurship and may be the “safe port” to which entrepreneurs retreat when their own anchor has been lost at sea or proves insufficient when the tide is strong or a storm is raging. Having set the stage, I will briefly describe each of the seven anchors as this anchor specifically relates to entrepreneurship and suggest several ways in which an organizational coach can best work with those entrepreneurs who rely on one or more of these seven sea anchors.

## **Creative Entrepreneur**

This is the traditional notion of entrepreneurship—the classic brave and visionary pioneer. These men and women make full use of the shifting sea anchor. They like to invent things, be creative and, most of all, run their own businesses. They like working with other people, but want to own (or at least control) what they create. They differ from those who seek autonomy in that they will share the workload, but are like the autonomous entrepreneur in their interest in control. They find ownership very important. They easily get bored. Wealth, for them, is a sign of success. Donald Trump has summed this up when noting that wealth is the only score card we have with regard to evaluating our value and success in contemporary society.

How might a coach be of assistance to a creative entrepreneur? First, it is not unusual for the creative entrepreneur to be stretched beyond their capacity (or the capacity of their co-workers). The entrepreneur’s coach can be of great value in helping her client not only fully appreciate his own capacity and the capacity of those working with him, but also in helping her client make the tough decisions regarding priorities once the capacity-limits have been reached. The sea anchor is shifting to such an extent that the client’s orientation and priorities might be unclear—leading to overwork and frequent loss

of focus. The coach might ask challenging questions regarding priorities: “What is really important to you with regard to this project?” “Why have you chosen to work on this project rather than project Y?” The coach might also ask challenging questions regarding her client’s capacity-limits: “How will you know when you’ve reached your limits?” or “You seem to be often exhausted (or are often complaining of being overworked or of having no time for yourself) . . . could this mean that you are at the limit of your capacity?” or “When does your body (or your heart) (or people who you love) tell you that you’ve pushed too hard (or need to slow down)”?

What if the limit has already been reached? In this case, the coach might assist her client by suggesting ways in which he can find support for a difficult decision to back away from some of his current initiatives or at least not take on new ones until some of his current entrepreneurial work is finished. This support might come from co-workers, from a boss or board, from friends or from a significant other in the entrepreneur’s life (the significant other is probably also suffering from the entrepreneur’s over-commitments). While support may be needed, the coach can also provide some challenge—some hard love—in pushing the entrepreneur to take some action to reduce the amount of work in which he is engaged. This is part of the irony of creative entrepreneurship: this person will often be willing to take on almost any project other than the most important one—the project of slowing down, conserving resources and setting priorities.

It is only when this very difficult task of setting limits occurs that the creative entrepreneur avoids the burnout and abandonment which is so common among these men and women. The creative fantasies that serve these entrepreneurs so well in the world of design and innovation often do not serve them well when it comes to acknowledging the realities of their own life. A coach to the creative entrepreneur must navigate a narrow path in encouraging the creative entrepreneur to be more realistic about their own energy level, priorities and emotional state, while also not dampening the creative fire which these gifted men and women bring to their work.

### **Technical/Functional Entrepreneur**

This second kind of entrepreneur is also well known—though often not identified as an entrepreneur. This is the inventor – the nerdish engineer who builds a new computer or the teenage-genius who designs a new software program. These men and women are the legends of Silicon Valley and other high tech centers around the world; yet, they are not necessarily the high flying legends of high tech. They might instead own a repair shop or work on a new invention in their garage. They might paint pictures or write novels – in hopes of making a few bucks and demonstrating their technical skills (while not as a rule being at the cutting-edge of their craft). These are the entrepreneurs who (with little fanfare) design a new

building (as architects), a new treatment program (as physicians or social workers) or a new financial program (as bankers or investment managers). These entrepreneurs might not be the next Thomas Edison, but they can make major contributions to our society and can generate considerable wealth for themselves.

Why aren't these technically and functionally competent people considered to be "entrepreneurs"? First, they don't fit the mold. Their sea anchor is not likely to move very far and they are often described as stable and risk-averse. These entrepreneurs often work behind the scenes and usually seek out someone else to actually run the business (unless they are super arrogant—in which case they often fail). They often look to partner with someone in one of the other entrepreneurial categories—in particular the managerial entrepreneur. Second, these men and women often do not consider themselves to be creative or innovative. They are more likely to think of themselves as simply "doing their job" or "building on work already done by other people." The very notion of technical or functional competence suggests that this person has learned their "craft" and they have received substantial and superb training in providing this craft. Yet, they are knowledgeable enough and gifted enough to move beyond what they learned from other people. They have advanced their craft and have taken risks while engaging in this advancement—thus they are indeed entrepreneurs.

How, then, does a professional coach work with the technical/functional entrepreneur? As a coach to this kind of entrepreneur, it is important to recognize that this kind of person likes being good at something and will work hard to become an expert. They like to be challenged and then use their skill to meet the challenge, doing the job properly and better than almost anyone else. They are competitive—though this competitive spirit is often hidden under a veneer of rationality, understatement and apparent modesty. These entrepreneurs want a standard against which they can work. This is one of the reasons why they are usually not considered to be very creative.

Given this general profile, their coach is likely to be more successful if he helps his client gain more access to the less rational and "softer" side of her work life (and, if appropriate, her personal life). As Jonah Lehrer has noted in his account of successful intuitive thinking, the work of a gifted technician or functional "genius" is often more a matter of hunches, approximations and visions than the technical/functioning entrepreneur may be willing to admit. A coach can help his client by encouraging her to reflect back on and fully appreciate the elements that went into a "breakthroughs" in her work. She needs to acknowledge all of her strengths and competencies—not just those that can be measured with a yard stick (or comparable metric). The entrepreneurial client will gain an even greater competitive edge if she can fully access and appropriately engage these other sides of her competency.

The technical/functional entrepreneur is also likely to have only limited access to her own emotional life and may find it difficult to work with other people—the domain of emotional intelligence that has become popular in contemporary management literature. A successful coach will work with this type of entrepreneur on the interpretation of other people’s behavior and on the appropriate responses to this behavior. The coach might ask such questions as: “Why do you think Jim gets angry when you offer him advice on the use of this equipment?” “When you take over responsibility for this project, why do you think other members of the team might get annoyed?” “What would be a more effective response to Susan’s withdrawal from active participation in the department meetings?”

At a broader level, the entrepreneur who is oriented toward technical and functional competency is likely to be a bit short-sighted in her perspectives regarding the work she is now doing and will be doing in the future. While the creative entrepreneur is inclined to be unrealistic in his assessment of current work (dreaming of the future and of unrealized possibilities), the technical/functional entrepreneur is likely to be caught up in the current work and enthralled with what she is now doing—giving little consideration to the broader or future implications of her work. Her coach can be of great assistance in helping this entrepreneur become more strategic in her thinking, rather than just being a very skillful tactician. This type of entrepreneur doesn’t need to become more realistic, she needs to be a bit more visionary. Often she will not recognize the full potential of her breakthrough. If we re-examine the life and work of Thomas Edison, for instance, we find that in many instances he was not himself the inventor. Rather he saw the potential in the ideas being offered by other people (inside and outside his laboratory) and brought these ideas to fruition. In many ways, Edison represents the third type of entrepreneur (managerial)—to which I am about to turn. A successful coach to the technical/functional entrepreneur will often engage (like Edison) in helping his client realize the potential of her work.

### **Managerial Entrepreneur**

This third type of entrepreneurship is all about driving to success with and through people. These entrepreneurs actually like the process of working with other people, whereas most other entrepreneurs only work with other people to increase the chances of success with the product or service they are creating and selling. For these managerial entrepreneurs, people are not just a means to some end—they are what it is all about. The process of management is often itself a major part of the invention being offered: a new way of managing, a new way of rewarding people, a new way of coordinating diverse activities spread throughout the world.

These entrepreneurs typically need to collaborate with someone who is concerned with content (product or service line) since they are primarily concerned with process. They can work in almost any field, given

their primary concern for process and people rather than specific content. Unlike technical/functional entrepreneurs, the managerial entrepreneurs want to be managers—and they want to be managers not just to get more money, although the financial rewards may be used as a metric of success. These men and women like collaborative problem-solving and dealing with other people. They thrive on responsibility. To be successful, they also look to emotional competence in themselves and the people with whom they work. Success for these entrepreneurs is tied up with emotional intelligence. If they are not smart about other people, then they are likely to fail.

What about the role of a coach who is working with this type of entrepreneur? The key coaching issue for these men and women often concern boundaries and (ironically) interpersonal issues. First, we will look at the boundary problems. These entrepreneurs often care too much about other people or about how other people view and evaluate them as managers and “people persons.” The managerial entrepreneur is likely to be oversensitive to criticism offered by their co-workers and will often seek approval rather than effective performance. These entrepreneurs need a bit more autonomy; however, their coach can’t make their client become more autonomous (which would mean that the coach is doing exactly what their client shouldn’t be doing—taking on the problems of other people). A coach can ask the important and often difficult questions that encourage her client to reflect on his boundary issues: “Is this really *your* problem, or should it be addressed by Kevin himself?” “Why did you leave this meeting taking over responsibility for this project from Susan?” “When are you most likely to feel that your co-workers have taken advantage of your generosity?”

It is often useful to use the metaphor of the “monkey” when working with the managerial entrepreneur. The monkey in any working relationship is the problem being addressed. Who owns the problem (monkey) and does the monkey leap from the shoulder of one person to the shoulder of another person? The monkey is particularly inclined to leap onto the shoulder of a managerial entrepreneur and to remain on her shoulder (even growing into the size of a gorilla when the entrepreneur begins to further worry about the problem.) A coach to this type of entrepreneur can be of great value in helping to identify the monkeys that currently sit on the entrepreneur’s shoulder and to identify on whose shoulder each of these monkeys should reside.

There is a related interpersonal issue that often should be confronted by the managerial entrepreneur with the assistance of her coach. This issue concerns interpersonal disappointment. The managerial entrepreneur not only is inclined to take on the problems that should be owned by other people, she also is inclined to blame the other person for not taking over ownership of the problem. Typically, the managerial entrepreneur was not clear in the first place about who should own the problem and usually

has never shared her disappointment or blame with the other party. This unarticulated “blame game” can often lead to burnout on the part of the managerial entrepreneur and a growing apprehension on the part of co-workers about the unexpressed anger and frustration being held by the entrepreneur: “Jim is a time bomb who is ready to explode at any moment!”

In addressing this problem, the coach can encourage a managerial entrepreneurial client to not only express her frustration and anger but also become more fully aware of the interpersonal dynamics associated with the monkey’s leap. Does the client take on the monkey when she is praised for being a wonderful helper or listener or when she is feeling sorry for the other person? Does the monkey leap onto her shoulder when she is asked to give advice or when the other person declares that the problem is unsolvable or too big to handle? Having identified the dynamics that occur, the coach can assist his client to identify alternative ways in which to keep the monkey from leaping over to her shoulder. Some role playing can be of value and the coach can model effective interpersonal relationships by not himself taking on the monkeys of his client!

A second coaching strategy to use in addressing the interpersonal disappointment of a managerial entrepreneur is based in the process of appreciation. The coach can help his client recognize the strengths of her colleagues: “catching other people doing it right.” This appreciative perspective holds several benefits. First, if a client can recognize the strengths in her colleagues, then she is less likely to take over their problems and the monkey is more inclined to remain on the shoulders of her colleagues. Second, the appreciative approach helps a managerial entrepreneur set more realistic expectations regarding her co-workers. Managerial entrepreneurs often have very high standards for other people regarding their emotional IQ and feel ignored, misunderstood or dismissed when their colleague doesn’t seem to be listening, empathizing or cooperating. While the managerial entrepreneur might possess high levels of emotional and interpersonal intelligence, she might be ignorant in one area of interpersonal relationships – namely an appreciation of the struggles other people have in their own interpersonal relationships and in their own emotional life. A coach can be of great benefit to his client in helping her become “smarter” about the “stupidity” manifest by other people in her life. A little empathy can go a long ways and can help a managerial entrepreneur be even more effective in her work with other people.

### **Autonomous/Independent Entrepreneur**

In contrast, to the managerial entrepreneur, the autonomous or independent entrepreneur (as the name implies) prefers to work alone or prefers to work in a small, flexible organization. These people have a primary need to work under their own rules and are driven by their own steam. Like the technical/functional entrepreneur they are not likely to see their sea anchor move very far. They remain

rather stable in their anchor because they have made up their own rules. They avoid standards and look for settings in which their individual and unique contributions are acknowledged and honored. This is a particularly difficult kind of entrepreneurship in that these men and women often do not have much of a social, influence or distribution network; furthermore, they usually do not have much interest in marketing. As a result, either they live their life in quiet despair (waiting to be “discovered”) or they are very fortunate to be discovered by someone who does have more of an interest in promotion of their product or service. In many cases, unfortunately, the discoverer will gain most of the financial benefits of the product or service and may even be misrepresented as the source of the new product or service.

What about coaching the autonomous entrepreneur? The first challenge is usually one of getting this entrepreneur to recognize that they could use some assistance. Their desire for autonomy often includes a reluctance to seek any kind of outside support. If the autonomous entrepreneur does seek out a professional coach, then the coaching challenge is often opposite to that posed by the managerial entrepreneur. The boundaries are not too loose or ill-defined; rather the boundaries are too tight. The autonomous entrepreneur needs to let other people into his work life. The coach can serve as a model for the reluctant client—showing that it is possible to ask for assistance and not give up one’s own identity or freedom.

The autonomous entrepreneur is also inclined to be impatient in working with other people. He often does not trust the competency of those with whom he now works (or with whom he could work). Alternatively, he doesn’t trust the intentions of his colleagues. This entrepreneur’s coach can be of great assistance in helping her reluctant client to sort out the trust issue. First, the coach can help her client determine if the mistrust is based in a sense that the other person is incompetent (trust in competence) or in a sense that the other person is not interested in the client’s welfare (trust in intentions). If the trust issue relates to intentions, then the coach might ask: “why don’t you trust this person—have they done anything specific to warrant your mistrust?” “What might you say or do which would enable you to test out this person’s trustworthiness?” If the trust issue is based in concern about competence then the coach might ask such questions as: “have you actually witnessed this person’s incompetence or do you just assume that he/she is incompetent?” “What might you ask this person to do that would demonstrate whether or not they are competent—something that would not impact in a significant way on the operations of your organization or project?” As one can tell from these questions, the key objectives are to determine the reasons for or sources of the mistrust and to determine what the other person might do to either justify or overturn the mistrust. The autonomous entrepreneur is often inclined to live in his own world, without much actual data to support his assumptions about the motives or talents of other people. A coach can be effective if



she helps her client open the door and let some data about the world enter the life of her autonomous client.

A second issue is commonly found among autonomous entrepreneurs. Like the creative entrepreneur, the autonomous entrepreneur is likely to take on too much of the work load. As I have already noted, this type of entrepreneur is hesitant to ask for assistance—and this extends to the workplace. This coaching client is often unwilling or unable to seek support from co-workers or delegate work. This is partly a matter of trust, as I have already indicated. It is also a matter of lost freedom and lost control. The autonomous entrepreneur fears that if he collaborates with other people, he will no longer be able to do what he wants to do, when he wants to do it and in a way that fits with his own work habits. To some extent this fear is justified, for collaboration always involves a loss of some freedom and control. The entrepreneur's coach needs to be honest about this trade-off (otherwise her client is likely to no longer trust his coach's intentions). After acknowledging the potential loss, the coach can help her client recognize the gains to be found in collaboration.

These gains might include greater success in promoting the product or service, broadened perspectives regarding the nature or use of the product or service, and the creation of an audience (made up of co-workers) who can fully appreciate the talents and achievements of the autonomous entrepreneur. While this third reason (appreciation) might not initially be acknowledged by the autonomous entrepreneur, it could ultimately be of greatest importance. Like the technical and functional entrepreneur, the autonomous entrepreneur is often less interested in the immediate financial benefits accruing from his activities than in the impact of his work on the world. If a tree falls in the forest and there is no one there to hear it, does the tree make a sound? If the autonomous entrepreneur has created a wonderful product or service by himself—but there is no one there to witness this achievement—than is it really wonderful and can the entrepreneur gain satisfaction in what he has offered the world?

### **Service-Oriented Entrepreneur**

Like the autonomous entrepreneurs, this fifth type of entrepreneur wants to know that she has had an impact in the world. In her case, however, the impact specifically relates to the welfare of other people in her world. It is not specifically about the product or service being offered—it is about the way this product or service is of benefit to people she wishes to serve. In many cases, these people are found serving the poor, malnourished, oppressed, under-represented, disempowered and dispossessed in our world. They are living on stormy seas in seeking to serve these under-served populations, hence their sea anchor is likely to be tossed around quite a bit, and they must constantly seek clarity regarding their own life purposes and values.

In recent years, this fifth type of entrepreneurship has gained greater visibility and more credibility. These are no longer the men and women who are misguided visionaries and “do-gooders” wasting their entrepreneurial talents and energy on unrealistic and inevitably unsuccessful projects. These entrepreneurs are now often involved in thoughtful and strategically-based projects that focus on the creation of fully sustainable and vibrant communities. They have become increasingly of value in our society as we face the exceptional challenges of a fragile economy, often dysfunctional government and disrupted climate and physical environment. I am going to spend a bit of time describing this form of entrepreneurship because most coaches and leaders are not very knowledgeable about this domain and because it serves such a critical need in contemporary societies.

The key strategy for the service-oriented entrepreneur is building fully sustainable communities. This sustainability, in turn, resides in nurturing something called *community capital* – which consists of three elements: (a) natural capital (all the things that nature provides for us), (b) human and social capital (the people that make up a community) and (c) financial and built capital (the structures, manufactured goods, information resources and credit and debt in the community).

The second element, human and social capital, lies at the heart of service-oriented entrepreneurship. Human and social capital concerns the way people work together to solve problems or run the institutions that exist in a community. It involves volunteer efforts and the community’s governing structure. It involves the enhancement of skills, the provision of education and the provision of adequate health services to members of the community. Set in psychological terms, human capital is the recognition and full use of the human potential that exists in organizational settings. Set in sociological terms, social capital is the building of social cohesion and personal investment in a community.

How does a community build human and social capital (especially the latter)? This element of community capital is built through *civic engagement*; furthermore, it takes human and social capital in a community to build the foundation for effective civic engagement. Just as a building can’t be constructed without sufficient financial capital, so a civic engagement project can’t be mounted without the requisite skills, knowledge and motivation of men and women in the community who wish to become engaged. At the same time, it is through civic engagement that men and women build new skills and knowledge, and discover the skills, knowledge they already have – as well as discover and intensify their own motivation to “give back” to their community.

What then about the third element of community capital—financial and built capital? This third element enters into the equation and relates to service-oriented entrepreneurship through a strategy often called *social entrepreneurship*. First encouraged in the creation of new social service agencies to serve the

severely underserved human needs found in many third world country (Bangladesh being a prime example), social entrepreneurship is now being embraced by many men and women seeking to address the unmet needs of North American communities. Typically, a social entrepreneurial project involves one or more of the other types of entrepreneurship. This strategy also involves collaborations between nonprofit organizations, for profit businesses and government agencies. In some cases, these projects involve micro-funding of key demonstration projects, while in other cases the project involves bringing organizational and managerial expertise to the men and women who have identified an unmet need and have successfully advocated for addressing this need in their community.

This translation of advocacy into action resides at the heart of social entrepreneurship and offers an important challenge to the service-oriented entrepreneur and her coach in terms of future directions and broader participation of community leaders in building this third element of the community capital equation. Social entrepreneurs create and maintain institutions that generate financial capital, that enable previously disempowered men and women to build things, manufacture things and provide services, and that build the infrastructures that enable information to flow and commerce to take place. These are enterprises that enable a community to address the fundamental economic issues of credit and debt.

How do service-oriented entrepreneurs help to build new alliances that involve nonprofit, for profit and governmental institutions to address critical needs in their community? What additional skills, knowledge and motivation is needed (if any) to work as social entrepreneurs? How do banks, corporations, small businesses, educational institutions, health care institutions and human service agencies come together to establish entrepreneurial enterprises that effectively serve the community (while also being sustainable enterprises)? These are the critical questions that a professional coach can help her client address. There is probably no form of entrepreneurship that can benefit as much from coaching, given these fundamental questions and the lack of many viable models of effective social entrepreneurship. A coach can assist her client in identifying best practices that now exist throughout the world and in linking her client with other resources in the field (including people, books, articles and on-line resources on community capitalism, civic engagement and social entrepreneurships).

A coach can also help the service-oriented entrepreneur at a personal level. It is very easy for this type of entrepreneur to lose themselves while seeking to serve other people and their community. They are even more likely than the managerial entrepreneur to have unclear or non-existent personal boundaries. This can lead (and often does lead) to personal burnout. Community-building activities have often failed in the past because those who lead these initiatives give up at some point—or at the very least come to recognize the cost of civic engagement in terms of their personal life. They lose touch with their own

family, while trying to benefit other families in their community. They abuse their own body and spirit while seeking to restore the body and spirit of the people they choose to serve. A coach can be of great value in challenging the service-oriented entrepreneur to take care of themselves and set some firm boundaries in terms of their obligation to other people and their community.

There is yet another personal challenge being faced by many service-oriented entrepreneurs. They often don't know when to give up. It is not just a case of setting an appropriate balance between personal needs and the needs of their community, it is also a case of being realistic about what can and what cannot be achieved. In this regard, the service-oriented entrepreneur resembles (and often emulates) the creative entrepreneur. Both types are likely to be risk-takers, who don't know when they have reached their limit. They don't give up. As Jim Collins has noted, this sense of persistence is a great quality in a leader—but it can also be carried too far and lead to disillusionment and burnout. Like the managerial entrepreneur, service-oriented entrepreneurs are inclined to take on full responsibility for the project in which they are engaged. They are not only likely to take on the challenge of fighting a large, fire-breathing dragon—they are also likely to take on this battle single-handedly and are likely to persist in this battle, even when bloody and exhausted. A coach is needed to provide substantial support to match the challenge being faced by brave (but often unrealistic) service-oriented entrepreneurs. If nothing else, the entrepreneur's coach can be there to provide thoughtful and empathetic support in witnessing the battle first hand or listening to the tales of struggle and, hopefully, occasional triumph.

### **Challenge-Oriented Entrepreneur**

Some entrepreneurs don't have much of a game plan. They just leap from challenge to challenge. Of all the entrepreneurs, the challenge-oriented entrepreneurs are least likely to have much of an anchor at all—other than the loosely tethered anchor of ongoing challenges. These entrepreneurs tend to move from project to project. While they may make quite a bit of money along the way (and may lose quite a bit of money as well) they are most likely to be motivated by a major challenge: “They said it couldn't be done and I have done it!” Howard Head offers a prime example of this unique type of entrepreneur. Head founded the Head Ski company in 1950. His aluminum and plastic laminate skies revolutionized the ski business (moving from the much heavier and inflexible wood skies). This wasn't enough for him. He was easily bored and was apparently quite difficult to work with. Having retired and taken up tennis, Head soon reinvented the tennis racket and got involved in diving equipment, as well as tennis balls, sports clothing and athletic footwear. He was always involved in the invention, production and marketing of merchandise associated with sports—but he was all over the place within this broad field and never seemed to settle into one niche.

In recent years, considerable attention has been devoted to the attraction of many people to challenging conditions. Csikszentmihaly studies and writes about something he calls the “flow” experience—which is the highly motivating threshold between boredom on the one hand (too much support and not enough challenge) and anxiety on the other hand (too much challenge and not enough support). Challenge itself becomes rewarding under conditions of flow— especially when the challenge is balanced off with support. Rock climbers and chess masters live for moments of flow. They are always looking for those occasions when they can be intensely focused and when time seems to stand still. The challenge-oriented entrepreneur is similarly looking for this flow experience and will move from project to project in order to find flow—and avoid boredom. These men and women are constantly seeking stimulation and are looking for difficult problems they can tackle. Such people will often change jobs and their career can be quite varied.

While these entrepreneurs can be quite successful, they often don’t move beyond start-ups. As short-term entrepreneurs they often sell their business (as did Howard Head) and move on to something else or look for product-lines or services that will be short-lived (fads). Like the legendary miners of the Gold Rush era in California they move on to a new potential vein of gold. Ironically, many people who do coaching exhibit this form of entrepreneurship and remain in the field of coaching for only a short period of time which it is still “hot”. The field of coaching itself might not be able to endure as something more than a fad if it is primarily occupied by challenge-oriented entrepreneurs.

How might a professional coach work with this type of entrepreneur –if they can set aside their own potential biases as challenge-oriented entrepreneurs? First, the coach needs to encourage his entrepreneurial client to be both patient and persistent. Strategic thinking should be encouraged, as is the case with many of the other types of entrepreneurs I have identified. This patience and persistence often is introduced by the coach when he encourages his client to trace out the consequences of frequent moves not just in terms of financial costs but also in terms of the personal costs for other people with whom the challenge-oriented entrepreneur is working. It is important for this type of entrepreneur to fully appreciate that her motivations and search for flow might not be aligned with the motives of people with whom she works (who may be more oriented to security-based ground anchors).

This deep appreciation for the motives of other people is often particularly important because the challenge-oriented entrepreneur frequently is highly talented with regard to short-term sales and visionary marketing. She can get other people to believe in her and the product or service she is selling. Then, when she abandons the project and moves on to something else, these other people are left in the wake and feel betrayed. The entrepreneur’s coach can confront his client with these costs and offer his client a different

kind of challenge—namely the challenge of remaining with the product or service she has invented. How does this type of entrepreneur find a way in which to stay excited about this project and to find flow in the daily work that is needed to sustain the effort? How does she justify the trust other people have placed in her as a challenge-oriented entrepreneur? These are the kind of challenging questions that an effective coach can offer this entrepreneur.

## **Lifestyle Entrepreneur**

I turn finally to a very special kind of entrepreneurship—the life-style advocate. These often-flamboyant entrepreneurs are selling something more than a specific product or service. They are selling an entire way of life—they are selling anchors! The lifestyle entrepreneurs are producing and selling something that relates to “the good life.” Some are emphasizing nutrition or exercise. Others are marketing a specific form of spirituality or a fashionable way of decorating their home or hosting a 15 person dinner party. These entrepreneurs range from Deepak Chopra to Martha Stuart, from Richard Simmons to Werner Erhard, and from Andrew Weil to Tony Robbins. In many instances, these lifestyle entrepreneurs are doing not much more than saying: “Live like me.”

Just as many professional coaches are inclined themselves to be challenge-oriented entrepreneurs, so we find that many professional coaches who focus primarily on the personal development of their clients are very much oriented toward lifestyle entrepreneurship. These coaches are often portrayed as sitting on their deck in Wyoming with the Grand Tetons in the background. They are on the phone with their client in Cleveland or Houston—extolling the need for their client to find their bliss or their bling. Or they are portrayed sitting in a beach chair on Malibu Beach or on a Kona beach seeking to assist their downtrodden and overstressed corporate executive in Omaha or Toronto find their way to the beach and their spiritual core. The irony in this mode of personal coaching is that the coaching client often wants to fully emulate their coach’s lifestyle by becoming a coach themselves.

These entrepreneurs look at the whole pattern of living among those men and women whom they are seeking to influence. They are not so much concerned with balancing life and work. They are much more interested in the complete integration of life and work—they believe that work should itself be life-giving. Like the challenge-oriented entrepreneurs, the life-style entrepreneurs are captivated by the moments of “flow” and by the moments when they can not only heal themselves but also help to heal the world. They may even take long periods of time off work themselves to indulge a passion such as sailing or world travel. Or they are active entrepreneurs for a limited period of time and then follow their own advice and retreat from the demands of entrepreneurship.

How might a coach assist this lifestyle entrepreneur? First, the professional coach must be careful about not colluding with their client in uncritically supporting the client's dreams and visions about the world in which they now live or hope to live. If the lifestyle entrepreneur is truly interested in the benefits to be gained from a coaching experience, then it needs to be something more than a narcissistic excursion into the coach's reinforcement of everything their client has said or done. D. W. Winnicott (a noted psychoanalyst) describes the splitting that can occur between the "true self" and a "false self" (that is based on unrealistic expectations regarding the role one plays in the world). While the false self is typically created in childhood (often as the result of one or more doting parents), it can also be created and reinforced in later life by those who become life-style gurus.

A coach can be of value to the life-style entrepreneur by offering challenges to her client's sense of self. This is done not to put down the values held by the entrepreneur or to discredit the entrepreneur's perspectives on life. This challenge is not about discounting the entrepreneur's personal and professional accomplishments. Rather, the coaching challenge is to enable the lifestyle entrepreneur to find a safe place in which he can reflect on his own decisions and on his own future life plans. While these entrepreneurs are busy selling anchors, they might have lost their own anchor. The life-style entrepreneur is not perfect and faces his own difficult life choices. Typically, there is not much benefit in sharing these imperfections and difficulties with the devoted followers of the entrepreneur. This not only will hurt the entrepreneur's business, it will yield reactions from the followers that are not necessarily reliable or helpful. The life-style entrepreneur needs his own sanctuary in which to discern his true self and in which to distinguish between the self he is presenting to his "public" and the self he is presenting to the significant others in his life – and to himself. As in the case of the coaching strategies engaged when addressing the needs of the other entrepreneurial types, the coach to a lifestyle entrepreneur is in the business of providing challenge and matching support. She is asking the questions that no one else is asking her client at this point in his complex and often shifting life.

## **Conclusions**

This journey through seven different types of entrepreneurship hopefully not only expands our image of what an entrepreneur is and how this person operates in the world; it also suggests variations in the way coaches can best assist their entrepreneurial clients. While I have identified differences in strategy for each entrepreneurial type, I have also suggested that there are certain common features in any coaching strategy (whether working with an entrepreneur or someone with a very different orientation to life). The balance between challenge and support is crucial, as is the role of the coach as question-asker much more than advice-giver. Entrepreneurs often lose themselves in the midst of their work. They must find their way back home and the way back to their true self. There are so many ways to fail as an entrepreneur and

as a coach to an entrepreneur and so few ways to win—but the wins are exhilarating and the learning along the way is breathtaking for all involved. A skillful coach can serve as an invaluable guide to her client in engaging this important and difficult journey. Furthermore, given that professional coaches are often themselves entrepreneurs, they may find that they are becoming co-learners alongside their clients with regard to navigating (with a sea anchor in tow) through the complex and dynamic environment of 21<sup>st</sup> Century entrepreneurship.