Spirituality and Entrepreneurship – Friend or Foe?

Many people think that spirituality and business, let alone entrepreneurship, contradict, in part because they appear to have different motivations and goals. However, if you think about it more closely, you can see that these two are intertwined.

Spirituality is a search for meaning and connection to something beyond our "normal" human experience. It requires you to deeply contemplate your place in the world and your purpose. By doing so, your understanding of who you are and what you believe in grows stronger. This may sound obvious, but this is a struggle for many. Such knowledge makes decision-making easier because your core values have been defined and refined. Thus, spirituality can help you build character and resilience, which are critical in times of uncertainty – the heart of any entrepreneur's existence.

And an entrepreneur's journey is a difficult one. Spirituality helps entrepreneurs manage the challenges during startup because it helps them cope with stress and ambiguity. Why? Because through spiritual practices, they discern what truly matters to them and how they want to build their company. When you have a strong understanding of your own motivations and goals you are able to better craft a business that

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matches your values. Studies have shown that employees want to work for a company that has values that align with their own. This has become acutely apparent with the pandemic as workers are choosing to change or stay at jobs that fit their principles. If you are starting your own company, why would you want to build one that doesn't match your own personal values and beliefs?

Also important is that through spiritual practice, people can increase their empathy, happiness, creativity, and productivity. At its core, entrepreneurship is outwardly focused on meeting someone else's needs. Essentially, an entrepreneur must create value for someone else. To do so, you must have empathy for your customers. Entrepreneurship training and programs such as The Lean Startup model have this in their foundation. To be effective, entrepreneurs must not only obtain, but also integrate potential customer feedback into their product and business planning. Spiritual practices can

improve an entrepreneur's ability to creatively respond to such feedback in a way that creates value for both customers and the company. As opportunity creation and recognition is a cornerstone of entrepreneurship, the ability to innovate based on empathy is a truly exceptional skill.

Lastly, spirituality offers another benefit to entrepreneurs: dedication and intentionality that can improve the performance of the company. Successful entrepreneurship requires dedication to the unknown, often with limited resources.

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