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Ten Simple Steps to Become a Successful Entrepreneur

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It was not all that long ago, I left a visible and lucrative career as a television news reporter. Last stop was ABC TV in Philadelphia where my stories ran on Nightline, Good Morning America and CNN as well as the local news each evening. It was a career, like many, that had taken a long time to build. And probably like your own careers, there were many scary times that I doubted my ability to succeed. From grunt work as a desk assistant for the NBC TV station in Philadelphia that included getting coffee for the late network news anchor Jessica Savitch, to reporter and anchor gigs in Huntsville, Alabama and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there were times I earned little, complained a lot, but never lost sight of my goal to come back home to broadcast in Philadelphia, the 4th largest television market in the country.

I grew up in a home where my parents taught me I could be anything and have anything if I was willing to go the extra mile and work harder than the next person. It's advice I share with my children today... advice that has paid off in spades as I climbed through the highly competitive television industry and ultimately left to launch my own business.

Given I have a degree in journalism and no real background in business, starting a coaching and training firm was challenging, to put it mildly. While I'm fairly savvy, balancing the checkbook is not my strong point and my family has banned me from helping our 5th grader with his math homework. When I quit ABC, colleagues and friends called me "nuts". After all, why would you leave a highly visible, coveted job in a major market to sit in your home office and try to get people to hire you to teach them how to talk? In fact, as I just wrote that sentence, it does sound like a fairly dumb plan.

But entrepreneurs are always looking for the next door. If it's cracked open just a tiny bit, we want to see what's on the other side, even if stepping through that door means never turning back. It reminds me of the imprints on our automobile rear view mirrors that say: "Caution: Objects are closer than they appear." Truth be told, what we strive for is usually closer than it appears. All we have to do is reach out and grasp to make it happen.

This year I will celebrate my tenth year in business. I've made a few mistakes a long the way, but I have also learned a lot which I would like to share with you so you can continue to grow, enjoy your own successes and share them with others who aspire to join the ranks of successful entrepreneurs.

1. Believe in Yourself. Fear is a powerful motivator. Be motivated and challenged by all of the people who tell you it can't be done.
2. Be a sponge. Read everything you can get your hands on. Attend as many professional development sessions that time and money afford. Watch the news, listen to the talk shows and then talk to everyone and anyone. Every person from every walk of life, regardless of what they do, has knowledge to offer.
3. Don't try to be everything to everybody. Focus on what you're good at and what you love to do. That's what you'll excel at and that's how you will provide the most value to your clients and customers.
4. Even the big guys are always looking for the next client. There is no such thing as coasting. Worrying about keeping clients forces you to bring new ones in the door. Your worst enemy is not the competition...your worst enemy is yourself.
5. Always strive to re-invent yourself and your product. Look for new ways to spread information, offer services and change the way you do things so you remain fresh, informed and can provide new services for your clients.
6. Integrity is King. Never Never Never compromise your values and beliefs. There is no such thing as an easy road to success or making an easy buck. No one gets discovered. But, they do earn success.
7. Leave your ego at home. I come from an ego driven business and I have an ego. That's not bad as it has served me well in television and in business. HOWEVER, the priority is the client. They don't care about how great you are.

They care about what you can do for them to fix their problems and make them better.

8. Know When to Let Go: Not every client is worth keeping. Some will drain time, energy and money away from you, your family and your business. So, learn to say no because compromising what's important to you can make you unhappy and cause you to compromise your own values.

9. Do what you say. So many people are so worried about pitching and competing for the business that they lose sight of what they told the client in those initial meetings. Remember what you said you would do and do it!

10. Have fun. Love what you do and love to get out of bed in the morning. If not, you're in the wrong business.

While sales, marketing, client development, public relations and so many other business considerations are necessary to climb the ladder of success; real success bubbles forth from your gut for your clients will feel your commitment, energy and passion that you bring to your own business and will pass on to them.

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Karen Friedman is one of the leading communications coaches in today's business world. An award winning television news anchor and reporter, she heads Karen Friedman Enterprises, a media and presentation training firm that has helped thousands of spokespeople across the globe make the most of every interview, appearance and presentation. A professional speaker and author of five communication survival guides, Karen has repeatedly earned the International Association of Business Communicators prestigious best-rated speaker designation. She can be reached at 610-292-9780 or through her website at www.karenfriedman.com