Why a Marine's Mindset Can Help You Skyrocket Your Company's Success



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Maybe you've never considered how the philosophy behind military boot camps could bring tremendous success to your business — but you should. Marines must survive a brutal test to prove they can hold their own, and many of the lessons they learn can easily be applied to an entrepreneurial setting. Leadership, discipline, perseverance and loyalty are all qualities of a great Marine — and entrepreneur. The mindset of a Marine is not all that different from the mindset of a great entrepreneur — a realization I came to in the backseat of an Uber where I met Frank, my Uber driver — and former Marine.

He took me on a 45-minute drive to the Miami airport, so we

had plenty of time to talk. “I’m retired military,” he said. “Marines.” In what little I know about the military, I know the Marines are some of the toughest. Aside from making me feel slightly safer on the ride, I was curious. “Is boot camp as hard as they make it seem in the movies?” I asked. “Worse,” he replied. “But it’s getting easier. I’m glad I’m retired.” That piqued my curiosity, and I wanted to know more, so I asked him to explain.

He told me that he had served three tours in combat and saw the strongest men break down. His fellow Marines were together, supporting, encouraging and having each other’s backs. The reality is that their lives depended on the ability and strength of the guy next to them in the trenches.

We’ve seen how boot camps are portrayed in the movies – *An Office and a Gentleman* with Richard Gere, *Full Metal Jacket*, or *G.I. Jane* come to mind but movies often play into the cliche storyline – how the recruit must dig deep and overcome their past or physical and mental hardships to spite their training officer and prove they can do it. They all win in the end. Of course, they do. It’s Hollywood!

But in real life, there’s a lot more to it than that. The mental stamina Marines must have to endure and withstand pain, fatigue, stress and hardship is unmatched – something all entrepreneurs could benefit to learn from when dealing with the day-to-day stressors of the job.

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When you approach an investor, for example, they evaluate you and your business based on their due diligence – examining every corner of you, your business, and what you claim to deliver. They’re judging your ability and strength in business. Your ability to do what’s needed to get the return you’re promising.

When you seek a partnership with another person or entity, they, too, want to make sure they're willing to 'marry' you. They want to make sure you will support and encourage each other and have each other's back – let alone make sure you can deliver what you promise.

When you want a promotion, your boss or superior must ensure you're worthy of the investment – financially, physically and emotionally. They need to make sure you're tough.

See the pattern here? What distinguishes great entrepreneurs from the rest is their ability to navigate the job with the following traits – traits that are integral to Marines:

Resilient
Strong
Able
Supportive
Encouraging
Reliable, and so on.

The question is, how does one develop these traits? We certainly aren't born with them. Just as Marines must endure boot camp, entrepreneurs must also endure the perils of the job. For military personnel and entrepreneurs, it comes from *adversity*. It comes from rejection, unfairness and failure – over and over and over again.

You'll lose out if you look at rejection as the ultimate failure, a hindrance, or something personal to you. If you look at rejection as the end of the line, you'll never achieve the heights you may have been born to reach. Just ask the likes of Oprah Winfrey, J.K Rowling, and Steven Spielberg. They've all experienced their fair share of adversity and failure, but ultimately, they can attribute these experiences to their success.

If you instead look at failure as a stepping stone for future success, you won't be held back from realizing your greatest

potential. As the saying goes, adversity is one of life's greatest teachers, but what if the ride wasn't as tough?

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Well, according to my Marine-tuned-Uber driver, being a Marine today is not as tough as it used to be. "Why is it getting easier, and why does that worry you so much?" I asked. Maybe he was a little biased, but I still wanted to know his take.

"What's happening now is that the military has to change its process because of societal pressures, and that means people can't be yelled at in the same way or pushed to the point of breaking."

I thought about business as he continued, "If the toughest guys who went through the toughest, most grueling boot camp can reach a breaking point in combat, what happens to the person treated more gently in boot camp? To the person who isn't pushed to the point of unfair or unacceptable language and directive?"

He continued to reveal how he would certainly not feel safe on a battlefield with people who didn't survive the worst of boot camps – the unfair, the abusive, the crushing. There is no sense of fair in battle, and people are out to win at any cost. In that situation, he wanted the strongest, toughest, most resilient person next to him in combat. It isn't about gender, sexual preferences, religious beliefs or other societal or personal choices. It's about who can withstand the brutality of a boot camp – one in which the instructors are not yelling for pleasure but to ensure you're tough enough to survive the battle.

While we're fortunate not to face life-or-death decisions in a conference room, we are encountering a similar sense of evaluation and judgment. Are we worthy of the decision-maker's funding, partnership, or promotion if we have yet to be deep

into rejection and failure? Can we handle the stress and pressure of high-stakes decisions that involve a lot of money or thousands of employees?

No matter how much you fear or loathe rejection and failure, it nonetheless gives you the skills and the gift of being worthy of every decision-maker’s choice.

Failure is inevitable.
Failure breeds resilience.
Failure offers a great learning experience if you examine it.
Failure can lead to unexpected innovation.
Failure builds character.
Failure is a sign of progress (and it’s usually not personal).

If you think of a pebble in the middle of a free-flowing river, you’ll know that it may cause a ripple in the water, but it doesn’t stop it. It just forces the water to take a slightly different path downstream.

Think of rejection and failure as pebbles in the journey of your success. And with that mindset, you’ll open your arms to rejection, failure and unfair decisions because you know it will toughen you up for business battles.

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