

Business as Relationship

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Like any relationship, the marriage of sole-proprietorship and business has a number of difficulties that are likely never to be resolved to perfection. Does that inescapable knowledge keep people from falling in love, from venturing into business? Not in my world. It seems not in the lives of many, as people have been pairing off and wading the waters of entrepreneurship from the beginning of time. The questions here are not whether people do or don't, but whether or not they can sustain themselves within a flourishing relationship.

I remember a colleague once telling me that a spouse "should be someone who can celebrate your success without jealousy, someone who will brush off your back when you fall on your ass, then gently remind you why you're trying." I've adopted his take on relationships. It seems wise to me that one should surround themselves with people who are *for* them. Wise also to seek out environments where a person has the opportunity to genuinely discover personal greatness. With this focus, life questions become less about zeroing in on idiosyncratic behavior and less than ideal circumstances, more about focusing on self-improvement and creating a generous existence.

As I interact with the difficulties of owning my own business, the day-to-day frustrations take a backseat to the bigger picture. I am pressed to ask myself if this relationship— this business— creates an environment where I can be nudged into discovering an internal place of thriving. Does it challenge me to learn new things? Does it offer me the ability to make mistakes as I explore my talents? Am I encouraged to find value in myself as I nurture and develop something significant? At the end of the day am I left feeling energized, knowing my contributions are worthwhile and well received? The ultimate question for me, besides the obvious one of financial stability, is: does this venture offer me the chance to grow and truly become the best person I can be? Like the journey of discovering the perfect mate, it's a glorious thing to be able to say yes. ✦

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