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LEAD FROM REALITY-PARTNERING –
Entrepreneurial Genius from a Higher Power

by Lauren Holmes

I THE CHALLENGE

Lauren,

My father just died unexpectedly and left me his fast-paced, high-tech, entrepreneurial company to run to ensure my mother and sister are supported. I have to decide quickly whether I'll run it, hire or promote someone else to run it, or sell it.

I want to honor his legacy but fear I may be exactly the wrong person to do it. I have no entrepreneurial instincts, no big ideas, and no craving to penetrate unknown territory. I've innovated before but I'm not really an inventor, a creative, or a marketing guru like my dad was.

However, when I read your "[Lead from your Creativity Domain](#)" article, it occurred to me that, like Nicholas, I might have a category of creativity that could make it possible for me to be more entrepreneurial.

I'm only 36. I'm one of many VPs of Finance at a large bank with all the latest technology. I'm good with numbers and computers. It's a solid career but not really one which excites me.

I'm risk-adverse and always err on the side of caution. Fortunately, I've rarely had to make a major decision on my own. There have always been people above, below, and beside me at the bank to keep me safe. Also, my dad was an insightful and trusted advisor always there for me. However, with him gone and very little depth in his company, decision-making on my own will be a challenge for me.

Would you be able to help me with this career-changing decision, Lauren?

Regards, Andrew – Aspiring Entrepreneur?

II GOAL REDEFINED

I knew your father, Andrew. He was such a talented man. A good man. An uplifting man. I'm so sorry that you, Elizabeth, and Anne must move on without him. Yours is an onerous decision for your future and that of your family. However, I've thought of an effective way I might help.

Increase the information for your decision

I think your decision would be easier to make if you had more information: (a) about the work you'd do as CEO and (b) about how you could become a successful entrepreneur.

To provide this information I propose I step out of the confines of helping you to make your decision. Instead, I propose we assume you've already decided to take over the company and my assignment is to upgrade your performance.

I'd start by focusing on the entrepreneurial territories in which you're the weakest: the product development and direction-setting characteristic of natural-born entrepreneurs. These are based on "reality-partnering expertise." You have the finance and administration expertise and experience already and your corporate bank clients have exposed you to running companies. Before I begin instruction, Andrew, I need to clarify some definitions.

"I'll introduce you to a higher power – a level of dynamic order hidden within the seeming chaos of reality. Then I'll give you strategies and tips for conscripting this higher power for entrepreneurial genius."

III DEFINITIONS CLARIFIED

"All humans are entrepreneurs, not because they should start companies, but because the will to create is encoded in human DNA, and creation is the essence of entrepreneurship."

~ Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn

1. Creativity defines entrepreneurship

Many assume anyone who starts a business is an entrepreneur. For me, innovation, creativity, "frontiering," and opportunistic activity differentiate entrepreneurs from "me-too proprietors." In the words of renowned management guru, Peter Drucker, "Innovation is the specific function of entrepreneurship, whether in an existing business, a public service institution, or a new venture started by a lone individual in the family kitchen. It is the means by which the entrepreneur either creates new wealth-producing resources or endows existing resources with enhanced potential for creating wealth."¹

For me, innovation is the improvement to existing information systems while creativity recombines existing information systems to generate an unprecedented information system. I'd prefer you strive to become a creator rather than an innovator in your high-speed, high-tech firm, Andrew. That way, everything about augmenting inborn and logic-sourced creativity in [*Lead from your Creativity Domain*](#) (Study 10) will empower you to become the entrepreneurial success to which you aspire.

Study 10 is about a formula for maximization which entails applying one's strongest, most rewarding talents to the most meaningful work for the most appreciative or valuing audience. *This formula is achieved by triggering peak-performance, peak-growth, peak-creativity, peak-rewards, top-talent-flow states within one's creativity domain where one is the most creative.* Top-talent flow is my invented subset of Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow: The Optimal Experience* (1991). It's our mechanism for instant biological maximization.

2. Environmental opportunism defines entrepreneurship

If we're going to address your shortcomings with respect to entrepreneurial product development and direction-setting, Andrew, we'll need to increase your reality-partnering expertise.

Robert E. Nelson is a co-author of the authoritative book entitled *The Practice of Entrepreneurship*.² Coincidental to our current reality-partnering focus, his definition of an entrepreneur links them to environmental opportunism.

Nelson describes an entrepreneur as a person who "is able to look at the environment, identify opportunities to improve the environment, marshal resources, and implement action to maximize those opportunities. ... Indeed, entrepreneurs create something new, something different, they change or transmute value."³

3. Creativity plus reality-partnering define entrepreneurship

As it turns out, both creativity and reality-partnering are automatically built into top-talent-flow events within one's creativity domain. Adhere to this formula, Andrew, and you'll have the ability to operate with the genius, instincts, responsiveness, and opportunistic perception of an exceptional entrepreneur.

I call it "*automatic entrepreneuring*." [*Lead from your Creativity Domain*](#) which you've already read, describes in detail everything you need to do for the creativity and reality-partnering you're missing. Problem solved!

However, what about a backup plan? What do you do if you can't get into top-talent flow? If you're a novice; if you're too stressed; if your flow state was interrupted; if the neurochemical resources sustaining a flow state have been depleted? My instruction today will therefore focus on increasing your reality-partnering between flows. "*Manual entrepreneuring*" if you will.

Fortunately, “automatic entrepreneuring” will teach you everything about reality-partnering. Watch it in action in top-talent flow to understand what reality is doing and why. Then do the same during “manual entrepreneuring.” However, since we must make you operational quickly, Andrew, I want to short-circuit your learning curve.

I’ll introduce you to a higher power – a level of dynamic order hidden within the seeming chaos of reality. Then I’ll give you strategies and tips for conscripting this higher power for entrepreneurial genius.

4. Entrepreneurship – a discipline that can be learned

Drucker describes entrepreneurship as a discipline. “Most of what you hear about entrepreneurship is all wrong,” wrote Drucker in *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*.⁴ “It’s not magic; it’s not mysterious; and it has nothing to do with genes. It’s a discipline and, like any discipline, it can be learned.”

Drucker’s more traditional entrepreneurial discipline fits within the larger biological framework of the discipline I’ll be providing you, Andrew. Many excellent business schools can educate you on state-of-the-art approaches to entrepreneurship. [*Lead from your Creativity Domain*](#) provides the more elusive spark that makes the traditional discipline work – the creative engine.

You’re smart enough and adaptive enough, Andrew, to learn both the traditional and biology-based disciplines to become the great entrepreneur your father was. So, let’s get started with some strategies for increasing your entrepreneurial prowess. You’re going to be surprised at how easy it is for you to follow in your father’s footsteps.

IV EXECUTION CREATIVITY

ANDREW:

One of my big concerns, Lauren, is that I’ve never had a big idea like Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, or Facebook. It seems to me that truly successful entrepreneurs had one or more breakthrough ideas that generated their success. I’ve no history of that. My dad developed four breakthrough ideas in the last year that now account for 50% of the projected profits in the next five years. I’m worried that I won’t be able to develop products to sustain the company in the face of the rapid evolution of this industry.

LAUREN:

Entrepreneurial success – One big idea versus thousands of execution ideas?

Many believe a breakthrough idea is key to entrepreneurial success, Andrew, or that a big idea will ensure sustained success. Rather, it’s the thousands of ideas required at every decision-

point of the implementation that spawn the superstars. Smart, fast, creative, idea-implementation is the stuff of iconic entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg.

Microsoft, Amazon, and Facebook were not started with an original idea. Execution creativity drove their sustained success. No need to take my word for it, Andrew. Here are quotes from Steve Jobs and other experts addressing the “big-idea myth:”

- “. . . one of the things that really hurt Apple was after I left John Sculley got a very serious disease. It’s the disease of thinking that a really great idea is 90% of the work. And if you just tell all these other people ‘here’s this great idea’ then of course they can go off and make it happen.

“And the problem with that is that there’s just a tremendous amount of craftsmanship in between a great idea and a great product. And as you evolve that great idea, it changes and grows. It never comes out like it starts because you learn a lot more as you get into the subtleties of it.

“And you also find there are tremendous tradeoffs that you have to make. There are just certain things you can’t make electrons do. There are certain things you can’t make plastic do. Or glass do. Or factories do. Or robots do.

“Designing a product is keeping five thousand things in your brain and fitting them all together in new and different ways to get what you want. And every day you discover something new that is a new problem or a new opportunity to fit these things together a little differently. And it’s that process that is the magic.”⁵

- “The thing that keeps a business ahead of the competition is excellence in execution.” ~ Tom Peters, Expert on Business Management Practices
- “It’s not about ideas. It’s about making ideas happen.” ~ Multimillionaire entrepreneur Scott Belsky, Co-Founder, Behance
- “Success doesn’t necessarily come from breakthrough innovation but from flawless execution.” ~ Billionaire Entrepreneur Naveen Jain
- “Ideas are a commodity. Execution of them is not.” ~ Michael Dell, Founder and CEO of Dell Technologies

Nowhere does the myth of one big idea rather than thousands of execution ideas play out more unequivocally than in the Winklevoss twins versus Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook. You may recall the movie, “*The Social Network*.” The twins thought their one big copycat idea – which was, by the way, not used for Facebook – entitled them to revenues earned from the thousands of implementation ideas which generated Facebook’s success.

Our focus for re-casting you as an entrepreneur, Andrew, must be about making you an execution creative. You’ll need instruction for both creativity and reality-partnering. [*Lead from your Creativity Domain*](#) provides the instructions you’ll need to augment both your “inborn creativity” and “logic-sourced creativity.”

I'll provide instruction on reality-partnering today. Both creativity and reality-partnering are built into "automatic entrepreneuring," so that's covered. Therefore, we only need to focus on reality-partnering during "manual entrepreneuring" between flow events. You can learn everything about reality-partnering outside of flow by watching it during flow. This is how I learned. Let me share some insights from my experience.

V LESSONS FROM "AUTOMATIC ENTREPRENEURING"

Reality's dynamic order goes undetected by those who haven't experienced long-term, top-talent flow. Consequently, the ability to capitalize on that dynamic order, that higher power, hasn't been cultivated by our civilization. That changes now, Andrew. Here are my strategies and tips to accelerate your proficiency with the reality-partnering portion of entrepreneurial genius.

A. Two Secrets behind Top-Talent Flow

Secret #1: Why reality accelerates flow-event pursuits

Why does reality proactively help us with facilitating people, events, and coincidences when we're in top-talent flow while it's seemingly so chaotic and obstructive when we're not in flow? The only logical answer is that we and our reality are a single system. When flow re-orders us inside, it re-orders reality simultaneously to achieve the same goals.

Therefore, if we're trying to achieve "manual entrepreneuring" between flows, we'll need to replace that re-ordering process. We'll need to order our interior maximizing machinery to drive the external machinery which has co-evolved with all living systems to maximize them. A higher power driving the evolutionary advance of reality.

For example, when we're in top-talent flow, only the parts of the brain required to apply our strongest talents to the task at hand are activated. The body's resources and focus are singularly dedicated to one challenge. That focus informs the entire internal-external system.

You'll need to discover your personal centering method to enlist the same beneficial and benevolent support from reality as flow incites. Perhaps mindfulness or concentration techniques could work for you, Andrew. One certainly doesn't want one's fears or internal conflicts driving the internal-external machinery when between flows. That would be chaos in the making.

Secret #2: Flow growth is cumulative

Many people – including flow experts – view flow experiences as isolated events. They aren't. Especially when we're talking about the top-talent-flow living that my work promotes.

To enter flow state, one must be stretched beyond one's previous capabilities. Growth is the entrance fee. Therefore, each flow state is a cumulative growth event.

The cumulative growth led by top-talent flow is consistently towards maximum performance. Evolution would not have selected any other goal for the survival of the individual or the species. This maximum occurs when we're applying our strongest, most rewarding talents in the most meaningful and contributive way.

That's why evolutionary forces selected addictive, emotionally-rewarding, biochemical complexes to entice us back to peak-performance, peak-creativity flow states; to growth, learning, and adaptivity; and to the application of our strongest talents.

B. Reality-Partnering Strategies

There are four key reality-partnering directions that the maximizing machinery running reality supports during and between flows:

Direction 1: Maximization

The call to maximize and re-maximize is never-ending. Maximization is the theme behind all of reality's positive and pulling messages and signposts. Watch to see them in action during top-talent flows to know how to use them between flows. Because we and reality are a single system, you'll find the same directional themes throughout. Read messages inside or out to know where to go and what to do in order to have events in reality facilitate your progress between flows.

Direction 2: Growth Paths to Maximization

If you experience top-talent flow regularly, you'll notice the content of those events shift to tasks associated with a specific series of growth paths. The top-talent flows are trying to maximize you from all sides and reality partners to help.

If reality's not giving you love between flows, try pursuing these growth paths. Not only will you sustain your entrepreneurial best, Andrew, that "best" is going to get continuously better for the rest of your life. Here are some of the stronger growth paths which reality favors:

- (a) the unceasing call to maximize and re-maximize;
- (b) the narrowing to your strongest talents and their most powerful application – the defining criteria for operating at the goal state of biological maximum or self-actualization;
- (c) the expansion of the impact of those strongest talents since, again, that would define peak performance;
- (d) the steady cultivation of your creativity domain through frontier after frontier;
- (e) the continuous development of your "Andrew talent science" to grow your expertise for applying your strongest talents;

- (f) the continuous expansion of your consciousness to increase your performance and functionality: functionality upgrades will include predictable improvements in executive-level cognitive skills such as increased conceptual skills; relational, big-picture, abstract, strategic, and systems thinking; pattern recognition; trend analysis; and such;
- (g) the perpetual pursuit of self-transcendence.

Read more about these key growth paths in [*Lead from Full Power, IV: The Growth Path*](#) (Study 7).

Direction 3: Historical themes or past patterns of events

In previous [Studies](#) and [articles](#), I've described how to identify tasks which will trigger top-talent flow events using several themes or patterns of high-performance events or pursuits from your past. The past predicts the future.

Honoring these themes between flows will ensure repeat performances of reality's support. Also, pursuing these themes will have you doing the very tasks which will trigger your quick return to the top-talent flow states of "automatic entrepreneuring," the real goal:

top-talent-flow theme; creative-success theme; creativity-pursuit theme; spontaneous-creativity theme; successful-projects theme and its corollary, unsuccessful-projects theme; knowledge-pursuit theme; spontaneous-knowledge theme; frontiers-pursuit theme; unpaid-work theme; meaning-pursuit theme; positive-emotions theme; and the above growth themes.

Tasks from these themes will trigger "automatic entrepreneuring" which offers maximum reality-partnering and creativity. You'll want to exploit this predictability.

Direction 4: Supported Projects

You'll also want to continue with whatever projects your top-talent flow states have been leading you to pursue and reality has been facilitating of late. Just as these projects have been supported by reality while you were in flow state, that support from reality-partnering will continue between flow events. Capitalize on this, Andrew.

But please do cease to pursue a supported project when you hit events impeding your progress – when reality is no longer supporting you. Try other directions or projects until you find one that reality supports with facilitating events. "Automatic entrepreneuring" will kick in shortly afterwards with this formula.

Because the past predicts the future, you can appear psychic. Knowing these four directions, means you'll know when reality will or will not support your actions or goals. The quality of your decisions, direction-setting, and project selection will increase dramatically.

You were concerned that you would not have people around you to help you make decisions, Andrew. Obviously, reality can now become your new partner for this.

C. Reality-Partnering Tips and Signposts

Let's look deeper into the instructional and directional messages from reality. As you contemplate each signal, validate it for yourself. Check your past to prove that signposts existed in your reality. For example, were there signals which flagged upcoming bad events that could have been avoided? Were there signals of good events that could have been embraced to change your life for the better? As you learn reality's language, exploit its predictability for future work. This is how you can operate as if you have the entrepreneurial instincts of natural-born entrepreneurs, Andrew.

1. Proactively pursue reality's facilitating events:

- (a) It's a good idea to always interrupt what you're doing to find out why facilitating events in reality are enticing you to proceed in a different direction. Facilitators don't usually exist unless they're beneficial to your maximization and achievement. Therefore, move in the direction they indicate as long as the enticements continue.
- (b) You may have noticed that when you're in top-talent flow, clusters of coincidences and other facilitating events increase significantly. In fact, there is usually an equal increase in breakthroughs inside. This is because we and our realities are a single system. They both reflect creativity throughout the internal-external system. They are both creations resulting from the re-combining of existing systems to generate a novel system. You've merged with nature's creative engine.

One coincidence or breakthrough can bypass hundreds of steps to your goal. They are therefore highly desirable. Move in their direction. Proactively exploit them for product development, execution creativity, direction-setting, creations, problem-solving, and so on.

2. Avoid past failed formulas: If a particular formula of activity or project has failed to yield profits or good outcomes in the past, it's likely going to fail in your future. Take some safe steps into the direction of alternative goals until reality shows it approves by responding with facilitators and support. These will indicate that you're back on your maximization path. Keep going. Top-talent flow will re-start shortly. Past patterns predict future patterns because the maximum for your system is a constant and how reality pressures your system to maximize is also a constant.

3. Pursue past successful formulas: There are no blocks or negative emotions in flow state. Therefore, if troubling events show up in your reality between flows for pursuits which have been supported in the past, you're likely trying to take this supported pursuit into the wrong direction or to advance at the wrong time.

If, historically, facilitating events have supported a specific project, try again later. Blocks may simply mean to delay. It could be that something else must happen first before you should proceed. That “something” could even be inside of you such as new information, a new perspective, a new skill, or the resolution of a conflict, for example.

The higher power for entrepreneurial genius is a maximizing machinery or infrastructure of systems about which it knows all. Reality’s signposts let you operate as if you too know all.

4. Capitalize on the dynamic order visible with expanded consciousness: How does expanded consciousness help you with “manual entrepreneuring?” Imagine your life events are boxes floating past you as you sit in a rowboat on a river. You don’t see the order. However, the order, the patterns, the trends, the synergies, the synchronization, the flow, and the interconnectedness of systems become obvious if you’re in a plane flying over the boxes on the river. You may not see reality’s dynamic order until your vision expands. That’s why, in normal consciousness, reality appears chaotic and random.

However, the best entrepreneurs glean critical information and opportunities from reality’s order. In [*Lead from Expanded Consciousness*](#), you’ll learn that consciousness expands the more time you spend in the “altered consciousness” that defines top-talent flow.

Now here’s the exciting thing about expanded consciousness and “manual entrepreneuring.” *Eventually, that expanded perspective is accessible without you being in flow state.* It becomes new functionality that continues to raise your baseline performance for the rest of your life. You’ll therefore want to keep testing the limits of this growing functionality to continuously improve your reality-partnering. This will be a new source of the entrepreneur genius you seek, Andrew.

5. Choose products which will meet reality’s maximizing goals: To access the most support from reality-partnering, choose goals or products which are consistent with the goals of the maximizing machinery driving human evolution. For example, think of products which unite and/or advance the system of humanity.

Think of iPhones, BlackBerries, PCs, Macs, social networks, and internet community websites. Their success for multiple entrepreneurs validates that reality supports this direction – in biological terms. Capitalize on this. Even when you’re not in flow, Andrew, you can still be selecting goals that will be supported by events in reality.

Check development histories for coincidences, breakthroughs, and magical facilitators to discover the themes of products that reality is supporting of late. Check what products reality supported for your father and competitors in his field.

Note that nature could care less about goals for money, fame, or other popular pursuits of traditional goal-setting. It only cares about biological maximization because that’s why evolution constructed this internal-external machinery. The amazing, proactive support from

reality's facilitating people, events, models, coincidences, information fuel for creativity, etc. is only accessible by those who're taking action towards maximization.

VI JOB DESIGN for ENTREPRENEURIAL GENIUS

Your true decision

You can see how a higher power can catalyze your brilliance as a successful entrepreneur and CEO, Andrew. Therefore, here's your true decision. Now that you know that running this company is possible for you, can you really go back to the mundane routine of your bank job? Here are some comments from others about such a decision:

- Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon, talks about his similar decision: "I knew that if I failed, I wouldn't regret that, but I knew the one thing I might regret is not trying." He also said: "It's not what you do and mess up, it's what you don't do that will plague you when you are old and looking back on your life."
- Seth Godin is an entrepreneur, best-selling author, and global thought leader for innovative business ideas and marketing strategies. He echoes Bezos' sentiment: "The only thing worse than starting something and failing... is not starting something."
- Mark Twain also reinforces Bezos: "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do."

ANDREW (laughing:)

Okay, okay, okay, Lauren. You can stop now. You've convinced me. I'm going to take over Dad's company.

LAUREN:

How to design your ideal entrepreneurial company

Excellent decision, Andrew. Let's start customizing your CEO job and, indeed, the whole company to augment your access to entrepreneurial genius from a higher power. We'll need to incorporate the tasks which will trigger top-talent flow and keep you experiencing the magic of "automatic entrepreneuring." The themes of past peak events and pursuits will help us to identify these trigger events. Work will become play if I can get it right.

What's the creativity domain in which you are your most creative? Can't wait to find out since you fear you're not creative, Andrew. We'll want to look at your growth paths as well. I find it so gratifying when the ideal growth paths for the company align with your natural growth paths

¹ Peter F. Drucker (2002) *The Discipline of Innovation*, Harvard Business Review, (August 2002)

² Robert E. Nelson (1982) *The Practice of Entrepreneurship* by G. G. Meredith, Robert E Nelson, Philip A Neck, International Labour Org; 4th ed. edition (Dec 31, 1982)

³ Geoffrey G. Meredith, Robert E. Nelson, and Philip A. Neck (1991), *The Practice of Entrepreneurship*, (Lagos, Nigeria: The University of Lagos Press).

⁴ Peter F. Drucker, (1985). *Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Practice and Principles*. New York: Harper & Row.

⁵ Robert X. Cringely documentary (1995), [Steve Jobs: The Lost Interview](#)