



Business Minded

A GUIDE TO SETTING UP YOUR MIND, BODY,
AND BUSINESS FOR SUCCESS

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BOSS, and Not Burnt Out

I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit. As a child, my sister and I typed up newspapers and sold subscriptions to our neighbors. In elementary school, a friend and I created a very thrifty business of selling acorns (complete with birth certificates) to classmates during recess. (This was banned by the teachers pretty quickly, but I swear we were onto something.) Both of my parents started their own businesses as well, and it was so helpful for me growing up to see adults create their own careers.

THE SEED OF A BUSINESS

Thinking maybe at some point I'd want to be an entrepreneur, I enrolled in Georgetown's undergraduate business school program. I wrote my entrance essay about starting my own stationery line which, come to think of it, is something I'd still love to do. But I always had the sense entrepreneurship wasn't something I'd do until I was well into adulthood, with college behind me and some work experience under my belt. I saw myself taking a more traditional path for a while and then, when I felt comfortable, I would maybe try to do my own thing.

However, there I was in 2008—my freshman year. At the end of the first semester, I was in my dorm room, overwhelmed with school, and, very frankly, wanting to drop out. The economy had crashed, and business school (with a huge emphasis on graduating and working in finance) didn't seem to make as much sense as it did when I applied. Somewhat randomly, a friend suggested that I start a blog, simply as a creative outlet...and the rest, as they say, is history.

For a couple of years, my blog was just that: a creative outlet. It was a bit of a lifeline, which also turned out to be a timely side project given the shifting economy. During the four years I was in college, the business program transitioned from a focus on finance to a focus on entrepreneurship. I happened to be studying the theories of business while running one from my own dorm room. I could take what I learned in the classroom and apply it to what I was doing with my blog. Oftentimes what was happening with social media was outpacing what my textbooks offered at an alarming rate.

Over time, though, what started as a creative outlet certainly became a job, both in the sense of the work I put in, as well as the income I received.

After graduation, I took a job with a startup in New York City. When I realized I was spending most of my waking hours building *someone else's* company, I wanted to give myself a shot and see what would happen if I devoted my time to my own business. I quit the startup—and haven't looked back!

BURNOUT

I have found a not insignificant level of success over the last decade, but it wasn't without some frustration and failure. What I consider my biggest failure may surprise you. It was *my mindset*.

When things switched from a creative outlet to a business, I went into overdrive. As a student, I barely slept. I was in classes all day, then in the library for studying and group projects, and then traveling to NYC nearly every weekend. I'd squeeze in my blog

work whenever I could, which usually meant after midnight and before my alarm for the morning went off. It was even worse when I was living in the city and working at my first job. I was very much burning my candle from both ends—all in the name of the *hustle*. (This time was when “girl boss” and “#hustle” were all over Pinterest.) I felt like I was failing myself by not trying to do it all, all the time. I thought I was supposed to feel exhausted and burnt out. The less I slept, the more successful I thought I must be because it meant I was working all hours of the day. I fed off this energy and saw my exhaustion as a strength, not a weakness.

And then, when I was in my mid-20s, I quite literally hit my breaking point. All those years of #hustle caught up to me, and my body revolted. Only then did I realize how dangerous my mindset had been. I wasn't sleeping enough, I wasn't properly fueling my body, and my anxiety had never been worse. After spending a night in the emergency room, I vowed I would make the necessary changes to my lifestyle. I realized that I had to, or else I wouldn't survive.

BECOMING MINDED

Even still, I did this thinking I was trading success for a healthier lifestyle. I was, after all, still confident that it was the health sacrifices I made in the beginning that helped me achieve my level of success. It took a couple of years for me to shake that feeling, when I had a light bulb moment. I was healthy (and more importantly *happy*) and reaching more goals in a shorter time frame! I went from thinking, *I wouldn't have been as successful without giving up sleep and my overall health to How much more successful could I have been had I taken care of myself from the beginning?*

I had it wrong all along. There are countless things you need to know to create a healthy, profitable business, and it's just as important to make sure you—the entrepreneur—are a healthy and happy leader.

YOU COULD HAVE THE BEST IDEA IN THE WORLD, BUT IF YOU'RE NOT ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY RUN THE BUSINESS, IT CAN'T SUCCEED. YOU ARE YOUR BUSINESS'S GREATEST ASSET.

PASSING THE TORCH

I love helping people flesh out ideas for their businesses and work through problems, no matter where they are in their journey. My hope is that this book helps you hone your ideas and feel more confident making decisions, without forgetting to take care of yourself along the way.

Business Minded is divided into two parts. The first helps you set up your business for success, and the second helps you ensure that, as an entrepreneur, you're able to run your business in a healthy, mindful way.

As you work through the exercises in the book, I share helpful information to decode confusing terms and intimidating concepts, and also provide you space to map out your business. Best of all, there is a healthy dose of inspiration and insights from other entrepreneurs.

—CARLY A. RIORDAN

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