

THE ORGANIC ENTREPRENEUR

Also by the author
The Naked Millionaire

THE ORGANIC ENTREPRENEUR

Cultivating the Conscious Capitalist

Maxine Hyndman



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Dedication

To three of the strongest women I know who have helped me define and build wealth:

To my mother, Gloria, who planted the seed of entrepreneurship in me from the time I was a child with her relentless pursuit of freedom through doing what you love;

To my daughter, Dalma, who gave me the reason to keep pursuing the means with which to support both her and myself, on my own terms; and

To my sister-in-law, Shelley, without whose brilliant guidance, vision, and steadfast support neither this book nor the first would ever have seen the light of day!

There is no agony like having an untold story inside you.
—Zora Neale Hurston

*There is one thing in this world which must never be forgotten.
Human beings come into this world to do a particular work. If
you forget everything else, and not this, there's nothing to
worry about. If you remember everything else and forget your
true work, then you will have done nothing in your life.*

—Rumi

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Introduction

Discontent and disorder were signs of energy and hope, not of despair.

—Dame Veronica Wedgwood, OM

It was Italy. I was in love. It was divine and *I* was discontented.

What exactly is discontentment? It is the restless longing for better circumstances—and I was definitely restless. Almost all entrepreneurs are at times and that is actually a very good thing. Discontentment is essential to propel us from the inertia and listlessness that has gripped much of our society toward the self-expression and fulfillment our beings long for. At the time, however, I had no idea that the journey of building a business often begins in earnest with this obnoxious ingredient.

I wish with all my soul that I had understood then that my discontentment was divine. As author Sarah Ban Breathnach writes in her book, *Simple Abundance*:

It is the grit in the oyster before the pearl. This creative second chance is when we come into our own. When we finally claim our own lives and wrestle our futures from fate. When we learn how to spin straw into gold. When we realize gratefully that we can live by our own lights if we access the Power.

That grit, that discontentment, is what is needed to drive the would-be entrepreneur out of complacency, dependency, and fear of the future into an experience of self-actualization on every level. It is not meant to be a curse or a handicap. If we use it wisely, we see it signals a perfect opportunity to fundamentally change our lives for

the better. That discontentment is the pumice that smoothes out the rough edges of our lives that have accumulated over time.

So many years ago, I was without this insight as I set out to start my own fabric export company. After that, it was an Internet business, then a marketing consultancy, and later a magazine. My winter of discontentment seemed to last for over twelve years—twelve years of searching for meaning in my life through business after business, some of my own creation and other times as an employee. At the age of thirty-eight, I had created and worked for so many businesses in so many industries that I most definitely felt like I hadn't a clue what it took to be a successful entrepreneur. Year after year, business after business, I attempted to squeeze myself into business models that were foreign to my inherent nature. I would take a great idea and try to mould it into an acceptable form based on the business paradigms I saw already out there instead of building my business from what I knew I had inside.

Eventually, I learned that there is much more to business than attaining what others deem to be “success.” In fact, it is of the utmost importance that you first identify and articulate to yourself what business means to *you*. As I did this, I began trying a different approach. And it worked!

Ultimately, I came to accept and respect the fact that entrepreneurship is my true state of being, but it had to be an organic process, one in keeping with my values and deepest nature. Only then was I able to see the overall design of my entrepreneurial life, like a grand patchwork quilt made from the remnants of each business I had built and each position I had held. What's more, I began to understand my Greater Purpose, that unique way in which each person contributes to the world. Every single experience had helped in some way to build toward a distinct and comprehensive vision of the services I was to offer.

Today, I am an author, money and marketing coach, and a highly creative entrepreneur. My business life has taken zig-zag turns, gut-wrenching deviations, and some serious nose-dives—oh, yes, and it has had the odd moments of peace and contentment. But it was that way for a reason. My organic business has led me here, to this point where I am now helping others to be entrepreneurs who respect *their* inherent nature, their environment, and their values, because the ripple effect of such a shift will be businesses that respect individuals, cultures, the environment, and the basic values of humanity in general.

The entrepreneur always has been and always will be an important part of human evolution, every bit as much as big businesses. Many of us are disgusted, disillusioned, and discontented with big business, but we shouldn't be. Businesses are built by people—individuals with or without integrity, those with and without respect, and so if we wish to build better businesses, we must start by being better people, better entrepreneurs.

This book does not denounce the value of business as it currently exists, nor is it intended to deride those who choose to run traditional businesses. This book is a quest, a call, and an answer for those who are interested in finding a *healthier* way of doing business. For indeed a new type of entrepreneur has emerged from the mist of reckless ambition and endless greed. This new type of entrepreneur is motivated less by *just* the bottom line and more by honouring the need for authenticity and respecting the integrity of their community, humanity, and their souls.

These new entrepreneurs listen, they allow themselves to feel, they give generously of their money and their time, they seek balance and fulfillment. They no longer believe the lie that to be successful in business, one has to leave one's morals, values, beliefs, and soul at the door in order to enter the gilded halls of enterprise. These organic entrepreneurs, as I call them, respect the soil in which they are plant-

ed and work within the cycles of their nature and the nature of their environment to find lasting success, meaning and balance in their lives and the lives of their businesses.

This new brand of entrepreneur calls, as well, for a new business model, one that is in keeping with our natures and with the natural rhythms of life. When we think of business, we rarely think of it in terms of natural cycles, yet businesses have their own seasons through which they progress: Winter (Incubation), Spring (Creation), Summer (Abundance), Autumn (Economy). Not only that, but within the larger cycles of our businesses there are micro-cycles going on inside each business “season.” As entrepreneurs, we must adapt ourselves to these cycles rather than simply viewing business as something upon which we impose our will. The organic entrepreneur learns how to do this and reaches inward to intuitively flow with ease to give and receive the abundance that comes inevitably with being a provider of employment that sustains many families, many lives, and many dreams.

I wish I had known the significance of business when I went into it in the very beginning. Business is a passion, a privilege, and a wonderful giver of financial independence, but business is not easy. Raising children is rarely easy, and having a business is a lot like raising a child from birth to, well, the end of your life: you never stop tweaking it, sharing with it, nursing it, and beaming with pride at its accomplishments. The entrepreneur knows this. There really is nothing like it!

The Organic Entrepreneur is written to share with fledgling entrepreneurs the things I wish I had known when I was just starting out. But it is also written for those in the middle part of the business journey, for those who have been disillusioned about business but who know there is more, and for those who have been banged around a bit and still want to play the game, but a much bigger game that challenges them to transform their view of community,

communication, and love. We must be willing to be *transformed* through business before it can become the inspirational medium it has the potential to be.

This book explores the process of the organic entrepreneur, the movement through the seasons of business, from incubation to creation, abundance to economy, with wisdom and patience and love. It examines what is needed to find the rhythm that crafts a business from within your very depths, in synch with your rhythm, showing you how to thrive in your own soil.

When we plan, create, accumulate, and economize with patience, appreciation, understanding, and love, we are giving ourselves the necessary ingredients to develop better products and services that not only serve humanity but that also begin to intuitively anticipate its needs. Just as the soil holds back more nutrients during the autumn anticipating winter long before it appears, and just as summer lightning provides necessary nitrogen to the soil—a necessary plant fertilizer during the season that has the most growth—our products and services are meant to do something similar: they are meant to provide “nourishment” to humanity.

Whether your dream is to start a new bank, create a new communication tool, or bake better bread, *The Organic Entrepreneur* will help you trust your discontentment long enough for you to find the courage within yourself to ride the momentary discomfort or fear.

So let the discontentment stir you; let it flutter then beat wildly until you can no longer take its cacophony of sound and you are moved to release it in the form of a business. Then move over, get out of the way, and let it transform you—your spirit, your mind, your emotions, and, of course, your bank account!