Always Working
ALWAYS
Dreaming

By Alejandro Gonzalez, NBPS Entrepreneurial Studies Graduate

STORY

Telling My Story

I never thought I'd be able to become an entrepreneur. I never thought I'd be able to translate my ideas into reality. Just a year ago, there were all sorts of mental barriers in my head telling me it wasn't possible for someone so young, and that I was too "busy" with schoolwork anyway. Luckily, I was introduced to entrepreneurship and startups when it suddenly BECAME my schoolwork.

In my senior year of high school, Mrs. Anastasia Hall introduced The Startup Studio's Learn to Start program to our school. This course replaced a financial literacy course on my schedule, and I'm glad it did. It only took one week to get me hooked.

On the first day of class, we had to stand up and introduce ourselves to the class with an interesting fact about us. What seemed like a typical icebreaker would prove to be a way to expose just how terrible we were at selling ourselves (in a good way). "I'm not interesting," "I don't know," "I see purple where you see blue but I refused to get it fixed because I liked my world better." Whoa! I guess there had to be someone who got it right on the first try. Even he would find areas for improvement in the first week. I may be spoiling the course a bit, but the point of this exercise was to demonstrate the power of storytelling. If you've ever listened to Simon Sinek: "They don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it." Of course, we didn't become master storytellers or salespeople right away, or even for the entire year. But we did make marked improvements. From reading off walls of text on template powerpoints, jittering in place, and hesitating at the first sign of doubt, we would work towards becoming able to predict and answer skepticism before it had to be asked, focus on our best material, and deliver a compelling raison d'etre (See, my French class WAS useful).

STORY in
Motion

DIFFERENCE

A Real Difference

For a pass/fail class, it's surprising to say that this was my most challenging course, and also the most satisfying. That's because everyone in the class needed to come face-to-face with the challenges they had been ignoring if they wanted to succeed. The real difference between The Startup Studio's Learn to Start program and most of my other classes was that the value of the experience was clear; no longer was there some arbitrary grade and homework that we had no way to determine the value of. Instead, we could see entrepreneurs from all over the world using the very same principles we were learning, even face-to-face sometimes. It's like seeing a software engineer actually use that one theorem you learned in Calculus II... over and over again. On top of that, while we were given an obscene amount of opportunities and resources, it was hammered home that the value that we would get out of the course was correlated to the effort we put in. The more we failed, the more we would learn and improve the next time.

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At the beginning of the course, we had known next to nothing about identifying a problem, formulating a value proposition, doing proper market research, or testing for profitability. By the end, we had been in the group where an idea needed to be abandoned, in the room with investors and entrepreneurs, and we had made tremendous progress.

DREAM

Accomplish Your Dream

...What, did you think that was the end of the story? What's the point of taking a course if you don't put the knowledge you learn to use? As I stand right now, it's been just 2 months since I graduated high school and exited the Learn to Start program at NBPS. I haven't suddenly founded Skynet and started mass-producing helpful little Terminators (yet), but if there's one thing I've learned from the class, it would be to stop waiting around and start creating your own opportunities.

You don't need to be an entrepreneur or a genius to do this! You can learn new skills online, write a book, or program an app. It can even be as simple as reaching out to family friends and asking them about their work over coffee. I've seen the massive opportunity offered by the Internet: Practically any information you need is out there if you know where to look. So, I started my own website to help people achieve their most ambitious goals, whether that be in personal life or in business. The point of me writing this article isn't to sell you on one course from The Startup Studio or my website, it's to sell you on working towards your goals as a whole. Your progress won't be instant, but it will be worth it once you accomplish your dream.

AUTHOR

About the Author

Alejandro Gonzalez is a mad genius and programmer. That term doesn't just apply to computer software though, since he also runs the website and blog at alexgl.com, where he teaches people to "program their life" in order to achieve their most ambitious goals. One of his most ambitious goals is to work with visionaries like Elon Musk and help the entire world. Easy, right?