

## We need entrepreneurs...

**New year's resolutions – already fallen away?  
...mmmmm. Rather try a**

**New LIFE resolution!**

I've come across lots of talk about fast-tracking the development of entrepreneurs. I get the impression that this is based on a belief that more entrepreneurs will help us create more jobs, and the hope that a few good concepts will firmly put us on the world stage. Perhaps then, we'll live happily ever after.

Entrepreneurs, leaders, pioneers and champions are the explorers who set the tone for our progress by forming new frontiers by breaking through limiting barriers and setting benchmarks. Surely, we must all encourage activities that will help us develop more of this. However, we must avoid the notion that defines entrepreneurs purely as money-makers. This world is largely driven by money matters but we must keep money in its rightful context – because where money rules the heart there is little room for honour, and honour is sorely lacking in our dilapidated global social structure.

Let's briefly look at the achievements of some of the pace-setters from the past:

1. Nelson Mandela led South Africa into a free democratic society driven by the spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness.
2. Mahatma Gandhi led India to freedom using peaceful protests and boycotts.
3. Mother Teresa dedicated her life to serving the poor.
4. Alexander Graham Bell's passion was to help deaf people hear. He is credited for inventing the telephone, an idea that came about while he was investigating how sound travels.
5. Thomas Edison fell in love with learning through exploring and experimenting; which made him one of the greatest inventors.
6. Bill Gates revolutionised the world's operating systems and at one time was the richest man in the world; but since retiring he seeks fulfilment by using his wealth to help the needy.

There are so many more, like Florence Nightingale, Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan, Martin Luther King, Martin Luther King junior, Roger Bannister, the Wright brothers, Walt Disney, Alexander Fleming, Chris Barnard. I believe that our world should be grateful that these people were not all focussed just on making money. These leaders were passionate about their work; they had vision, and they were hard-

working.

I must share this experiment: One day I showed two packets to a class of twenty teenagers and asked them to imagine that one packet had a million rand in it and the other contained a process that would teach them to make a million. Each student had to choose one or the other and then make a list of what they would do with it. Eighteen chose the money, almost instantly; and their lists included buying new cars, mobile phones, clothes, gadgets, going on trips, etc. Two chose the process; one said that this would allow him to make many more millions, and the other said that she would use it to make more money with which to teach and help disadvantaged students. It would seem there are among us a large number who are conditioned to be consumers and very few who have their minds set on becoming good producers, and even fewer seem set on serving others.

Entrepreneurs, leaders, pioneers and champions are a rare breed, which is mainly because people are generally not prepared to stand up to the challenges that toughen the human character. Most people want the easy way, instant gratification and quick-fix remedies; we also demand security and guarantees. I believe that this is the self-defeating mind-set that limits the production of good entrepreneurs, because it is from life's character-toughening processes that true entrepreneurs emerge. It is during the tough times that our character and integrity is best is tested and developed!

- Chris Lew May 2016

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