

The Top 5 myths that drive solopreneurs...into the ground.

By Robert Gerrish

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Robert Gerrish
robert@flyingsolo.com.au

Flying Solo <http://www.flyingsolo.com.au>

1. To succeed, you have to work long hours

There's no doubt that starting and growing a business takes commitment and involves time and effort. Working long hours, however, is often not the answer.

If you're working without taking a break, you'll not be working effectively and you'll soon become exhausted.

To be productive; to think clearly about where your business is headed and to serve your clients well, you need to keep your own well-being at the top of your list of priorities.

Schedule time away from your place of work, give yourself permission to take a breather and you'll be more likely to see new ways forward - ways that may not involve such a large drain on your energy and your life.

2. To do a job properly you have to do it yourself

If you are doing everything yourself, you're not really running a business, you've got yourself a job, and a fairly tough one at that.

Being able to delegate or to outsource is a skill many solopreneurs fail to learn. By doing everything themselves they're effectively admitting that they have no particular speciality, no one strength. That's not necessarily a problem for everyone - some people like doing everything - but can you see how it limits growth and opportunity?

Take a look at what you do best, where your skills are best applied and then see what else you're involved in. How would your business develop if you spent more time in one area and less in another?

Keeping a detailed timesheet for two or three weeks is a great way to track where your time is going and can teach you things about your work output that you'd never imagine.

3. It's best to work hard now and enjoy later

Sorry I don't buy this. My Father fell for this one and later never came. Enjoyment simply must be a

part of now. Live for the present, enjoy it to the full. Period.

4. In business, you don't say 'no' to work

A common assignment I set to my coaching clients is to practice saying 'no' to work. Not for the hell of it; for the heaven of it!

Saying yes to everything, grabbing anything that's going is usually a sign that not enough thought has been given to what constitutes an ideal client or ideal work.

Get clear on what is ideal work for you. Don't just look at the nature of the work, but consider the characteristics of the people that bring you that work. As your focus becomes clearer you'll recognise ideal clients earlier and over time you'll draw more of these people to you.

Remember when you got a new car and you noticed lots of the same model around the place? It's the same with your business, get really clear on where your opportunity lies and you'll see more openings.

5. Balance is what happens on weekends

Sadly, the structure of our society seems to support this view: work like a dog all week, recover at the weekend. I reckon the Europeans have got it right - close down in the middle of the day for a few hours, spend time with your family and take a snooze.

Alas this is simply not practical for most, but it pays to look closely at what is possible and challenge your current behaviours.

Why did we start our own businesses? Wasn't part of it a reaction against 'normal' working practices? What's really stopping you?

As an exercise, try designing your ideal week on a sheet of paper. Schedule in the things you'd love: time for a walk perhaps, an early finish one day a week, some daytime visits to the gym. Factor in whatever you would really like. As a target, aim for say, ten 'luxuries'.

Now set yourself a goal of introducing two or three a week, every week for the next month. Not convinced? Refer back to point. 3.

Robert Gerrish is a coach working with those going it alone in business. For more of his tips visit his website at: <http://www.flyingsolo.com.au> or to make contact email: <mailto:robert@gerrish.com.au>

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