

eTIJARI

INSPIRIN - MILLENNIAL - ENTREPRENEURS

POINTS TO PONDER



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
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بِنِيَّةِ رِسْقِ اِسْلَامٍ اَنْبَا اِنْشَاءً مَلِكِيَّةً
Garden of Knowledge and Virtue

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**"Play by the rules, but be
ferocious."
- Phil Knight -**

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DR INTAN AIDURA ALIAS

SWIMMING LESSONS AND BECOMING AN ENTREPRENEUR

What do swimming lessons have to do with becoming an entrepreneur? The preparations can be similar, and it starts by taking lessons. Recently, after facing one of my usual down episodes, in the wee hours of the next morning, I decided to enrol in a swimming class. The class started that day itself. Talk about ad hoc actions! My sharing is about the learnings from the swimming lessons that I took. I paid for four classes, but the coach allowed for six classes, alhamdulillah it was so nice of them. To tell you the truth, I have not really mastered the strokes, so the lessons should continue later. For each lesson, the coach usually wraps up the class with four activities: back float, fetch the "sticks", 20-times bubbling session, and star-float.

Main lessons

1. Ask help from Allah, say a specific prayer.
2. Have basic knowledge.
3. Get a trainer/mentor.
4. Enhance knowledge.
5. Do, practice the skills.
6. Manage the thoughts, don't listen to the fear.
7. Work at your own pace.

Say specific prayer

Usually, people like to put prayers at the end of the effort. To me, prayer is part of the effort, and it should be the first thing you do in any behaviour. In Islam, a behaviour does not begin with the performance of the behaviour nor end with the execution of the behaviour. Instead, it starts with the intention in doing that behaviour. When does the behaviour end? When it gets cancelled any time after the completion of the behaviour. A lot of things need to be in order for a behaviour to happen, and so this requires a lot of help from Allah. And we start by saying a specific prayer such as "I can follow the lessons well", "complete the lesson as planned", and "the lessons will benefit me".

One of the instances that I could recall vividly, at the end of a Fajr prayer, I made a specific supplication for the success of my tasks, particularly because it was the last class. I had resigned myself to the fact that I would only manage to learn breaststroke and not freestyle as planned by the coach. "It's okay, at least you can do something in the water now, not afraid as before", I comforted myself. The prayer was about the things I wish to do and the things I wish I not to do. These two aspects should be considered. Not doing something is as important as doing something. For instance, while I ask myself to relax, I also have to make sure I don't think about drowning. Any drowning thoughts need to be suppressed or countered. So, say bismillah, take a deep breath and submerge in the water. Do not give any chance to the bad thoughts.

Similarly in doing entrepreneurship activities, all efforts should start with a prayer, to earn the blessings of Allah and ask for His help to make things go smoothly. The prayers are specific so that the prayers can also direct the effort that we make.

Get the basic knowledge

Basically, basic knowledge will help me to be safe and act correctly. A basic knowledge in swimming is how to do breathing while swimming or the term used was blowing bubbles or bubbling. This was the first lesson. We inhale and exhale by blowing bubbles through the nose. If we do not blow bubbles, we will not need to inhale. However, not inhaling (holding your breath) for a long time (long at least to us learner swimmers) is a dangerous act to do. It may lead to body tension and carbon dioxide build up, which make you exasperate for air. I remember when this happened, thoughts of drowning would appear, and I became panicked and quickly tried to inhale without getting my face safely out of the water. My hasty move resulted in me having water in my mouth or worse in my nose. The latter is really a painful experience because you feel the pain spreads to the head surface. I would touch my head each time this happens to reduce the pain. And that painful experience was enough to remind me to be more careful. However, all these are not done intentionally, rather they are reflective behaviours. The acts are not easily managed. According to the coach, with practice, they will be easier. Therefore, until I get my breathing correct, I could only pray that I would not have to swallow pool water and may what I swallowed do not cause me harm. Alhamdulillah, no noticeable effects so far.

Another basic knowledge is what to do to bring your body back to an upright position again after lying in the water. One of the important techniques to learn is how to bring your body upright from the lying position, i.e., how to save yourself. What I had to do was simply bring down my legs. After I learned this simple technique, the fear of drowning reduced a bit, and I could psych myself to stay calm and stand up whenever I was short of breath. However, the thoughts of “you’re going to drown” still appeared repeatedly, but since I now knew how to save myself, I could silence those intrusive thoughts. I realised it was such thoughts that would make me panic; and in my panic, I would not remember what I needed to do. That is when I can drown. Of course, this technique can only be applied with the water level just at my chest, where I can stand confidently.

In relation to business, it is very important to have basic knowledge. These are the knowledge you use all the times. Among them are basic accounting, basic marketing, and self-management. You also need to know basic survival skills like what to do when encountering challenges. These were the modules that Youth & Single Mother Sejahtera flagship prepared for their entrepreneurship programs which I had the opportunity to be involved in. Basic accounting helps you to monitor your income and expenditures so that you know your true profit or losses, basic marketing helps you to design effective promotional material about your business, and self-management module shares psychological and Islamic concepts in managing thoughts and behaviours.

Managing thoughts of being inferior and self-doubts

In swimming, the most important thing is to stay calm in the water and perform the steps accordingly to move in the water. In the early stages, the overthinking me would have me think and plan my steps first before going in the water. However, I found that I was too distracted to plan. Or I would think of something worrying and make myself unnecessarily afraid. So later, I just recite bismillah, take a deep breath and drop my body in the water, and swim. I did not give any chance for my busy brain to intercept the action message.

A maladaptive thought always crept up when looking at how others were doing, and I was still struggling with my strokes. It said, “you cannot do it, Intan”. I had to plunge the thoughts into the water as I got into the water and stay focused on my tasks. Each time the thought appeared, I said “it’s okay, slowly”; and recited bismillah to raise my confidence and extinguish the fear.

I cannot forget the times I had to do back float. My brain kept saying “lemas, lemas (drown, drown)”, repeatedly. I had to make sure I occupied my thoughts with zikir or focus on my breathing instead. But the moment I lose focus, those intrusive thoughts would take over. I had to stop the back float. It was certainly a challenge to get my body to relax in the water. Nonetheless, I did experience those split-second moments when I can feel my muscles relax, those were the little achievements to be treasured.

To be a successful entrepreneur, you have to learn how to manage your thoughts. Many events can happen but what you perceive of the events are the most important. Be careful of self-destructing thoughts that will pull you down. If you are like me, who is always bothered by maladaptive thoughts, it is important to realise the tendency and analyse these thoughts first. Usually, these thoughts are not founded by true facts. You just need to reject them. But make sure you replace them with adaptive thoughts. Otherwise, the damaging thoughts can appear again uninvited.

Practice, practice

I had problems coordinating my limbs to follow the steps and had to get them to act naturally. The science behind the movements was important for me to grasp to help my body adapt to the required steps. I managed to somehow combine the hand strokes and the leg kicks. Coach told me that I have gotten the steps correct, I just need to calm myself further and practice.

Practising a skill helps the brain to make strong synapses for the actions, the muscles get tuned, become more familiar with the environment thus eases the discomfortable feelings. When you are calm, you can think clearly and make sound decisions, able to do the tasks easily.

Have a mentor

It was very important that I had a personal trainer that could teach me the specific skills and monitor my progress, give constructive feedback. A change in my way I noticed as I went through the classes, I asked specific questions on how to do it right, where I went wrong. Usually, I would just listen. Perhaps, it was one of the ways to cope with my disappointment when I made a mistake. The coaches were very supportive, patient when I am taking time to master the skills.

Mentoring sessions should not be too serious. There should be light humour to ease any tension that arises.

It's important to have a business mentor, someone you can consult for tips, advice, and constructive feedback. Someone to catch your hand when you are drowning.

Work at your own pace

There were a few people in the class, each at a different level as we join the classes at different times. I can see others' progress and sometimes a bad thought would pop up saying that "I wasn't as good as them". It was important to not compare yourself with others and instead work at your own pace. Focus on your own progress. It is okay to see how others are doing to enhance your skill or knowledge but not to compare. You have your own abilities and limitations just like the others.

I remember a brief conversation I had with another learner after the class as we were getting ready to go back. She complimented my progress, but then criticised herself. It turns out she was actually disappointed with hers. I cannot help but to relate to the similar feelings I have. I remarked that we just need to focus on staying calm and adjust the steps to our own condition. She had given me a thumbs up earlier when we were in the pool. Her gesture made me more confident. It was interesting to note that while she was saying good things about me, she was saying bad things about herself. This is the danger of comparing yourself with others.

Relating to this, keep celebrating your own achievements, even the small ones. Acknowledge and be happy with the progress you are making. You know the effort you have put in performing the task. Be happy and thankful for the little things that you manage to successfully execute. I recall the feeling after having four classes and I had managed to do strokes to swim across the short length of the pool. The strokes were not perfect, but they were acknowledged as correct by the coach. "You can do it with more practice" remark was motivating enough for me.

In business, your progress follows your own pace but make sure to still look at others. Looking at others to compare and learn the effective techniques used by others but not to downgrade or discount your effort.

Challenge yourself

Two activities we had that I considered very challenging for me was fetching the "sticks" and dive into the pool. Until my final class, I still was not able to do the first task correctly. I could only reach the "sticks" if the coach pushed me down into the water. I need more practice on this task. Another one is diving into the pool. Imagine with you not being able to swim properly yet and you are asked to dive into the deep pool. With the little bravery I had in me, and concentrating on what I had to do, I managed to dive, twice. The second time felt less fearful compared to the first. I remember as I got into the water, I was struggling to stay afloat until I reached the edge of the pool. When I could no longer stay afloat, I tried to stand upright. I panicked as the water was rather deep at that side of the pool, I cannot really reach the floor and had to jump on my toe to stay safe. I rushed to grab the coach's hand. It is quite hilarious to think how frightened I was. The coach laughed a bit seeing my gestures. But she checked I was okay before proceeding with the lessons.

Sometimes, you just have to dive into the challenge without being fully ready. Perhaps you will face pain or danger but knowing there is help nearby (your mentor), makes you brace the challenge.

Invest in tools

The coaches used swimming tools to assist us such as paddle, surfboard, and pool noodles. The tools helped the execution of tasks depending on what skills we lacked. For example, the paddle was used to practice the hands' movement in water.

It helped that I asked the coaches about my mistakes and the occasional feedback I received from them. Light humour helped to ease the tension I felt. I remember vividly the moment that I had just managed to do a short lap and a swimming mate gave me a thumbs-up. I was surprised with the gesture, but it made me happy and motivated me to continue my practice. Alhamdulillah.

References

Blowing bubble ends your troubles (2018, November 8). Little Otter Swim School.
<https://www.littleotterswim.com/2018/11/blowing-bubbles-ends-your-troubles/>

ARTICLE OF THE DAY

**NURUL ATIKAH
SAMSUDIN**



**SITI NORNAJIHAH
AHMAD JOWAINI**



SOCIOLOGY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is the process of developing, organising, and running a new business or program to generate profit. Entrepreneurship has always been associated with the economic component. The entrepreneurial perspective is defined by risk-taking and exploration, and it is a critical component of a country's capacity to thrive in a global market that is always growing and getting more competitive. From the viewpoint of university students, the entrepreneurship bureau of students' association is one of the most important bodies which is established to help clubs or students' societies to generate funds for their clubs' use. Generating money can be a great source of income to ensure the smooth implementation of the program and activities of the clubs. On the other hand, entrepreneurship activities and events organised by the entrepreneurship bureau can also provide opportunities for students to promote their goods and products. Entrepreneurship bureau can also organise training programs such as a talk that teaches the students on how to be a good entrepreneur and how to do business effectively.

Another useful activity that the bureau may organise are trainings or discussions that can extend the theorisation of entrepreneurial orientation across various perspectives. Sociological perspectives for an example, may provide distinctive contributions to the understanding of entrepreneurship. Sociology views are different from other fields of study because they analyse entrepreneurial activities from the standpoint of social contexts and corresponding processes and effects. Entrepreneurship is seen as an activity which not only helps the entrepreneur in their economic status but also provides social opportunities for society. Entrepreneurship can provide job opportunities or employment for the members of society who might need it. It is also an excellent way to bring the community together. An entrepreneur may have a well-established business that can meet most customer's expectations if they consider all the social factors, including social taboos, conventions, culture, and other religious beliefs. Entrepreneurs should embrace the system of a society for their own development as well as the development of their business, according to Max Weber, who developed the sociological entrepreneurship theory. As Malaysia is a country with multi-religions and multi-ethnics people, entrepreneurship is seen as an area which can produce good relations and integration among the people. For instance, the example of integration that successfully produced entrepreneurship can be seen whereby a shop is owned by a Chinese but operated by the workers from other ethnicities which are Malays and Indians.

To conclude, entrepreneurs should include sociological perspectives and study because it may aid in the construction of social production conceptions. An entrepreneur may better understand their client base by learning how cultures divide society into distinct strata and how each level of stratification maintains somewhat different perspectives. The ability to create a marketing plan based on the characteristics that the target or consumer have in common would be most advantageous. In any case, sociological knowledge is extremely helpful in achieving those goals.

BIZ TIPS

BUSINESS TIPS & ADVICE ON STARTING A BUSINESS

Be Passionate

You're going to devote a lot of time and energy to starting a business and building it into a successful enterprise. It is important for you to have passion for your business project.

Have a support system

You need a support system while you're starting a business (and afterward). A family member or friend that you can exchange ideas with and who will listen sympathetically to the business start-up crisis and issues is invaluable. Even better, find a mentor. At the IIUM, EDC offers advising, training, and support to student entrepreneurs.

Write a Business Plan

You'll need to write a business plan backed by strong research to clarify your vision. You'll use your business plan like a GPS for how to structure, run, and grow your new business. Writing a well thought-out and organized business plan dramatically increases your odds of succeeding as an entrepreneur.

You can find an example of business plan here:
<https://medium.com/seed-digital/how-to-business-model-canv-as-explained-ad3676b6fe4a>

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