



3 Essential Skills Every Entrepreneur Should Cultivate

By Bryan Elliott

If you're an entrepreneur, you've got your hustle on. You don't work normal hours, every day is spent on your business and you're doing all you can to make it go. You know how to work hard, but there are other skills that great entrepreneurs need too. In Seth Godin's new book *The Icarus Deception* (Portfolio, 2013) he shares three essential skills every great entrepreneur needs.

1. Quiet your lizard brain.

Whether you know it or not, we all have what Godin refers to as a lizard brain. He says, "The lizard is a physical part of your brain, the pre-historic lump called the amygdala near the brain stem that is responsible for fear and rage and reproductive drive."

Godin⁹ has written a lot about this in previous books including *Linchpin* and *Poke the Box* and cites author Steven Pressfield¹⁰ for further explanation - "As Pressfield describes it, the lizard brain is the resistance. The resistance is the voice in the back of our head telling us to back off, be careful, go slow, compromise."

The resistance is writer's block and putting jitters on every project that ever shipped late because people couldn't stay on the same page long enough to get something out the door. The resistance grows in strength as we get closer to shipping, as we get closer to an insight, as we get closer to the truth of what we really want. That's

⁹ See: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/topic/seth-godin>

¹⁰ Read about Steven Pressfield on the next page

because the lizard hates change and achievement and risk," Godin says in *The Icarus Deception*.

Quieting the lizard brain is a constant struggle for entrepreneurs. It is a skill that needs to be developed. But as we tune into the frequency of what we feel is the right decision and tune out the lizard brain we will be able to truly test our business plans and hypothesis.

2. Think like an artist.

Most of us put ourselves in one of three categories. Godin breaks it down into being either the chef, cook or bottle washer. Chefs run the show, they hire and fire, make plans and big decisions for their subordinates. Chefs have all the power. Cooks are the executors; they get it done. Bottle washers are often disrespected. They are the grunts on the front line in the trenches doing the dirty work. Which one are you at this particular day and time?

In *The Icarus Deception*, Godin challenges us to think beyond the norm and become artists.

"It's not art if the world (or at least a tiny portion of it) isn't transformed in some way. And it's not art if it's not generous. And most of all, it's not art if there's no risk. The risk isn't the risk of financial ruin (though that might be part of it). No, the risk is the risk of rejection. Of puzzlement. Of stasis. Art requires the artist to care, and to care enough to do something when he knows it might not work."

Thinking like an artist instead of like chefs, cooks and bottle washers opens up a whole new world of possibilities for change, progress and success.

3. Connect the disconnected.

Connecting people on the surface might feel like old-school networking events where everyone just exchanges business cards. Godin writes about "The Connected Economy" and explains that the era where we needed to care about

catering to the masses is gone. It's about connecting people who are disconnected - then connection becomes a function of art. The opportunity in the Connection Economy is about finding the problem (i.e., where are people disconnected?).

This is an essential skill that might require significant effort, he says: "How much connection did you just make? That's one way to measure whether or not the work you did made a difference. When you make a daring comment at a meeting, when you produce a video or app or an idea that spreads, when more people visit your farm stand because they can't get enough of the way you engage... Boring and safe rarely lead to connection. Connection happens when humility asserts itself."

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About the Author

Bryan Elliott is CEO of The GoodBrain Digital Studios and a Southern California native with a 15-year history on the client side of brand marketing and production in industries including action sports, entertainment and movies, and digital tech.

Recent credits include writer and executive producer of the recently launched reality web series, *Looks Easy*, and *Behind the Brand*, a TV show that profiles the people in business who are making things happen. *Behind the Brand* is in its fourth season with more than 40 full-length episodes.

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