

10 Pearls of Wisdom for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

As we all steamroller towards the end of 2016, here at the [New Entrepreneurs Foundation](#) we took a step back to reflect on the last 5 years of NEF and how entrepreneurship has changed (or not).



NEF celebrated 5 years of contributing to the entrepreneurial

5 years is a long time in the entrepreneurial world. Enough time for industries to shift, fashions and trends to come and go, innovation to chew you up, spit you out and leave you dazed in its wake.

We stumbled across some advice, given by our [inaugural cohort](#) back in 2012, to their succeeding NEF [Class of 2013](#) and realised that there are some things every entrepreneur can do that will empower their mission and is completely free! A universal list of Do's for all entrepreneurs if you like.

So, as NEF steps out of its startup years, we thought we'd share our Class of 2012's 'Top 10 Pearls of Wisdom' for all entrepreneurs striving to make it happen!

1. Look around you for support

There are plenty of people striking out on their own just like you. Tap into these people's knowledge, experiences and support. Give your support to others and, in turn, they will return the favour.

2. Prove yourself to people

If you're working for a fast-paced startup while you contemplate taking that leap on your own, make the most of the environment you're working in. Listen. Watch. Be humble. Get your hands dirty. Do the photocopying. Work hard. Show that you are committed. Push yourself. Push in. You might be tested for months. It's a marathon, not a sprint.

3. Talk to people: Network

It's not what you know, but *who* you know. Talk to the people you already know, tap into new groups and explore the networking landscape. Attend [meet-ups](#) and talks (so many great & free events happening virtually everywhere), go for a beer with like-minded people on a Friday evening and join [Silicon Drinkabout](#). If you put yourself out there, you will meet some of the most influential people in the business world: heavy hitters, experts, potential investors, and potential competitors. Don't waste a moment of these opportunities. Cultivate relationships. Don't just ask for favours. Make friends.



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4. Talk to people: share your ideas

Don't be afraid to share your ideas with your colleagues, friends, a mentor (if you have one), family, your network. Everyone has good ideas. But do they have the team, the investment, the experience and skills to make it successful tomorrow? Probably not. Worry less about NDAs. Opt more for the 'lean start up' method.

5. Read

From the [FT](#) to [Disrupts](#) magazine. Read it all. Regularly.

6. Write

Record what you learn and build on this knowledge base. Start a blog. Get a notebook.

7. Do

You will learn far more from failure than from success. Get over your fears by just doing it. Find someone who can challenge you and hold them to account.



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8. Study and learn

Be prepared to learn from others. Workshops, training days, courses, practice. Get your hard skills up to scratch. Embrace those soft skills.

9. Use your brand

You are an entrepreneur. From the moment you decided this, you created a brand for yourself even before you had a business idea. Tell people who you are. What you do. Use it to open doors. Most people, however important or busy, have 15 minutes to spare for a young entrepreneur who is eager to learn.

10. Get outside your comfort zone

You will never get anywhere if you refuse to throw yourself into the unknown. Say "Yes!" Try things out, experiment and you may be surprised by what you find.