

On Life and Meaning

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Episode 48 – Tana Greene – Maximizer Futurist

Finding a Better Way

And now a personal word,

There is this mindset that Tana Greene has that dazzles me. It is a mindset that highly effective and disruptive entrepreneurs have, particularly those that operate at scale. It is not one trait, but several characteristics that combine into a disposition and set of behaviors that create value for stakeholders and finds a better way.

I've seen these traits in my dad, who started several companies in different countries. I've seen them in friends and associates who have launched businesses and non-profit organizations. I've seen these traits in artists who create ventures and platforms and enterprises.

What are these traits?

First, entrepreneurs take action. They engage. They force change. Planning has its place, but it is in service to action. They do not overanalyze. They figure it out as they go.

Second, entrepreneurs have something to prove. They are often insecure. About any numbers of things: family, appearance, education, social status. Ambition drives them to accomplish something that compensates for the insecurity underneath.

Third, entrepreneurs are resourceful. They make use of what they have. If all they have is an idea, they leverage the idea. The idea is what allows them to attract everything else they need.

Fourth, they cause trouble. Entrepreneurs are trouble-makers. They disturb arrangements, hierarchies and the status quo. They break and make things. They would rather ask for forgiveness than for permission.

Fifth, they are energized by the trouble they cause. Disturbance creates opportunities. The change they cause gives them an edge.

Sixth, entrepreneurs recover quickly. They are resilient. They have grit. They go on to the next play. There is something about the blood and bruises of engagement that spurs

them on. Not that they like to lose. They don't, but a fight not joined is a fight not enjoyed.

Seventh, entrepreneurs are drawn to challenges. The more seemingly complex and intractable the better, as solving them unlocks value. The bigger the risk, the greater the return.

I think about the entrepreneurial mindset in our politics. We can describe Presidents this way. We can have someone who is more deliberate and thoughtful; who is secure in their identity; who prefers existing arrangements and the status quo; who provides order and stability. We can also have someone whose inclination is to force action; who may have something to prove; who is a trouble-maker; who makes and breaks things; who enjoys the disturbance they cause; who is energized by solving seemingly insurmountable challenges and is driven by the return that may follow. We can understand the will of the people in the most recent American presidential election as a choice between these two archetypes.

There are additional elements to sustained entrepreneurial success and value-creation: one, a moral core, a deep and abiding sense of what is right and wrong; two, curiosity, a hunger to want to know and discernment and respect for what is true; and three, caring about what matters most, relationships and ideals.

It is these additional elements that may be missing in an entrepreneur who we elected to be President, with great consequence to our nation and the world, but which seem very much integrated in Tana Greene. We can see her resilience moving past her first marriage; her resourcefulness relying on the power of goals to manifest desires; her insecurity about her background and credentials that she confronted to help others; the action she takes forming and re-imagining companies; the complexity of the market challenges she takes on; the value she unlocks. We can also see a deep moral core in the principles that guide her decision-making and the promises she keeps. We can see her curiosity and personal development in her writing and painting. We can see her care for relationships and ideals; that success is not enough, that significance matters more.

Tana Greene finds a better way.

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