

THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is defined as the ability to operate a business, taking great financial risks in order to profit. Do you know that the term 'entrepreneur' was taken from the old French word "entreprendre"? It means to undertake a task, especially a theatrical production. Apparently, the original meaning did not carry the idea of taking great financial risk. At the very least, it means to make the most of what you have and to bring out the best from a group of people with different gifts and temperament, by helping them complement each other.

In its original meaning, entrepreneurship means to be a good steward of what you have with regards to both people and resources. Like in Abraham's case, in order to create a breakthrough, he had to make do with the land his nephew Lot rejected. Yet in spite of this, he was able to build a business with an army of 318 men that defeated the kings who looted the kingdoms of Sodom and Gomorrah. So too in the case of Joseph, while he was made a slave and later a prisoner, he excelled in all the responsibilities he was given. His attitude and these experiences gave him the ability to save Egypt from 7 years of famine as its Prime Minister. I believe what Abraham and Joseph accomplished were no lesser feats than what Henry Sy and Steve Jobs has achieved today.

Like Abraham and Joseph, I am learning that the great entrepreneurs of today started only with very limited resources and education. Most of them were not able to borrow money from the bank or attract investors because they had no collateral to offer nor a track record to show. But I believe it was their difficult circumstances that forced their creativity to grow, their characters to mature and their abilities to increase. These are things you do not learn in school nor acquire with money. It is possible that the bank and investors eventually came to offer them help so that they were able to take their business to the next level. But the financial help did not come in the beginning but only when their abilities had matured.

Recently, I discovered something very, very interesting. Because people have the power to influence Wikipedia, their new definition of entrepreneurship has changed. Today, it is defined as the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which is often initially a small business. By nature, everything that becomes big and fruitful starts from something small, like a seed. My prayer then is that you all ultimately experience greatness as you take good care of the limited resources entrusted to you today.