



CUT THE LIFEBOATS

NOTES ON ENTREPRENEURIAL THOUGHT LEADERS
VOLUME 2 (2006-2007)

Cut the Lifeboats

Notes on Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders Volume 2 (2006-2007)

PersonalOpz

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*Thanks to Stanford University for this inspiring resource.
And my family for further inspiration and support.*

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Preface

The second volume of my notes on Stanford's Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders series contains advice from leaders in the business world such as Reid Hoffman (Linked In) and Carly Fiorina (formerly the CEO of HP), a leader on the sports field (former quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers Steve Young), and a leader of the military (former Secretary of Defense William Perry).

There were many greats quotes that I considered using as a title but I settled on *Cut the Lifeboats* as I'm starting to learn that the entrepreneurial journey is one where you need to keep moving forward no matter what. The option of turning back holds you back. Act as if your life depends on it. Of course that sounds cliched and melodramatic but cliches often are based on truths. Become an entrepreneur because you cannot possibly do anything else.

Many of the lectures in the 2006-2007 year were great but the one that touched me the most was by Jackie Speier and Deborah Stephens. Jackie Speier has overcome many extreme hardships throughout life, including being shot five times on an airstrip in Jonestown and losing her husband while she was pregnant, but has overcome and is now a U.S. congresswoman. She has chosen to be a survivor rather than a victim.

I'll close this out with one of her quotes, "Life is short. Do

it now.”

Will

Research Lens on Understanding Entrepreneurial Firms

Date: 2006-10-04

Speaker: Kathleen M. Eisenhardt (STVP)

Link: [Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders¹](#)

A great team is three to five people.

Two engineers are a terrible team.

Good teams have people that have worked together before.

Combination of great team and great market can return 20x.

You want to go for (raising) money when you have substantial signals that you're a good firm. You want to be able to show people you have accomplished something.

Build a relationship with someone before asking them for money.

There is nothing harder than closing the deal.

Pay attention to who might come into your market and how you can keep them out.

¹<http://ecorner.stanford.edu/authorMaterialInfo.html?mid=1577>

Great opportunities are shaped not discovered.

If you're in an ambiguous new market you want it structured.

Risk for young companies is they don't get structured enough.

Vision, Values & Strategy

Date: 2006-10-18

Speaker: Rick Wallace (KLA-Tencor)

Link: [Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders](#)²

KLA-Tencor makes equipment for semiconductor manufacturers.

They're focused on inspection and measurement.

There isn't silicon in Silicon Valley anymore.

Performance leadership leads to large market share.

Their firm enables Moore's Law.

You can't fix what you can't find.

You can't control what you can't measure.

You need to know where you want to go. That needs to be understood throughout the enterprise.

Your sense of values are what guide you.

Investors are different than customers which are different than employees. They all matter.

²<http://ecorner.stanford.edu/authorMaterialInfo.html?mid=1575>

The only long term advantage you have is your people.

You have to motivate your employees.

It is more important to be the best than the biggest.

If you want people to be honest and forthright with you
you need to be that way with them.

The higher the differentiation the higher your gross margin
and the larger your market share.

You want to grow faster than the industry.

You can't fall in love with the deal (acquisition).

Founding Prosper, a People-to-People Lending Marketplace

Date: 2006-10-25

Speaker: Chris Larsen, Jim Breyer (Prosper)

Link: [Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders](#)³

Distribution of money is becoming democratized.

When money is lent by your neighbor you feel a sense of shame that goes beyond your credit score.

Banking industry separates money from what people do with money.

It is an emotional roller coaster.

If you're doing something that is good for consumers regulators will give you a lot more leeway.

Weed out the mercenaries and you're left with the missionaries.

Expanding internationally too early can be fatal.

Cut the lifeboats.

³<http://ecorner.stanford.edu/authorMaterialInfo.html?mid=1576>

Thanks for Reading

Thank you for reading *Cut the Lifeboats*. If you enjoyed it you can visit the [PersonalOpz blog](http://www.personalopz.com/blog/)⁴ to read other tips I've accumulated on business and life. There you can also sign up for the mailing list where you'll be sent future books for free.

Please don't hesitate to email me (will@personalopz.com) with any questions or comments.

Thanks again,

Will

⁴<http://www.personalopz.com/blog/>