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Fear of letting go of your past

Ten years from now, you don't want to be doing the same thing. You want to flex some different muscles. You've been bitten by the entrepreneurial bug, and you can't ignore it. You imagine the freedom of being your own boss and of setting your own schedule

Last week, we discussed the fear of failure, and how to keep it under control so it doesn't stop your entrepreneurial dreams in their tracks. In today's installment of the Neophyte Entrepreneur, we will talk about letting go of your past, no matter how successful, so you can move on and make those dreams come true.

When you lean back in your chair at work, you reminisce about all the great successes you've had in the past, and feelings of peace and pride wash over you. A little smile grows on your face as you think to yourself, "I am so damn good at what I do." Reliving the hard-won glories of your past massages your ego and drives your self-confidence through the roof. You are proud of yourself, and you have every right to be. But as great as your career has been, you want to move on.

Ten years from now, you don't want to be doing the same thing. You want to flex some different muscles. You've been bitten by the entrepreneurial bug, and you can't ignore it. You imagine the freedom of being your own boss, of setting your own schedule, and of exploring new opportunities without having to get a committee's approval first. You wonder if the same things that made you successful in the past will carry over into your new career, too. You feel confident they will, and you eagerly await the opportunity to put them to the test.

You need to be careful, though, because finding self-confidence in your past achievements is a double-edged sword. It can actually hold you back. You see, when you are looking back at the past, you aren't living in the moment. And when you aren't living in the moment, you can't move on to the future.

Letting go or being stuck?

There's a well-known story of a monkey who reaches into a tree and grabs on to a tasty nugget of food. But when he tries to pull his prize out of the tree, his fist is too big. He can't pull it out. So he has to choose between letting go of the prize and being free, or holding onto the prize and staying stuck to the tree forever. Sometimes being free means having to let go of the prizes you already hold.

How can you make sure you don't hold onto past prizes so firmly they keep you tied to the past? How can you let go and embrace the future? One way is to start getting rid of comforting but repetitive social habits. We often spend most of our time with the same group of people. Yes, building close friendships with people you have known for a long time is really important and a key to long-term happiness in life. But there are times when you need to explore new things and meet new kinds of people. This is one of those times.

Seek out the people who already embody the kind of life you want to create for yourself. Mingle with them. Learn how to think and see the world like they do. Start attending events and conferences that are unrelated to your past profession, but that will help you in your future venture. For example, if in the past you have been a brilliant finance manager, but your new venture will require more marketing knowledge, attend a marketing conference. You might feel funny at first, as if you have nothing in common with the people you meet there. But in your future life, you will spend as much time marketing as financing, and attending these conferences will help you later, when you need to be comfortable putting on a marketing hat.

Rest assured that none of these activities mean your past is no longer relevant. On the contrary, your past has prepared you for the future. However, when you make a concentrated effort to periodically let go of it, you take a small step away from the person you were, and towards the person you will become.

Next week we'll wrap up the Neophyte Entrepreneur mini-series, where we've been discussing the transition from the corporate life to the entrepreneurial. We've spent the past three weeks talking about the specific fears professionals encounter during the transition. Next week, we will wrap up the series by planning the launch of your new life, including the single most important aspect, taking action.

Links with China save Kurdish entrepreneur

ISTANBUL
Hürriyet Daily News

Born to a poor Kurdish family as the oldest of nine siblings, Fezvi İlhanlı today presides over a group of companies that are active in various areas, from textile to shopping centers. İlhanlı, 37, is an entrepreneur from Silvan, Diyarbakır, southeast Anatolia.

Though many firms look to the West for opportunities, İlhanlı, a primary school drop-out who started working at the age of 13, has a firm focus on the East, with one hand in China and the other in South Korea. His textile machinery factory in China employs 450 workers, while another 8,000 Chinese work for his subcontractors there. The İlhanlı Group, which reaped \$150 million in turnover last year according to a press statement distributed to journalists Wednesday, is also planning a joint investment with Korea's Kiturami in Diyarbakır. The planned factory, which may produce 30,000 combibolers per year, will mean a joint investment of \$20 million with Kiturami. İlhanlı is waiting for the government's regional incentives to come into effect.

It becomes all the more impressive when one considers that only two years ago İlhanlı was commercially "lynched" over allegations that he was "a partner" to former lawmaker Leyla Zana, the veteran

Fezvi İlhanlı, a Kurdish entrepreneur, was hit by rumors over alleged links with pro-Kurdish politician Leyla Zana. His D'Silva shopping center in Istanbul came under so much pressure that he had to change the name to FoxCity after millions of dollars in losses. Today he has strong links with China and South Korea



RISE: Fezvi İlhanlı, the oldest of nine siblings, started working as a textile worker when he was a child. Last year his group reaped \$150 million in turnover.

pro-Kurdish politician who spent 10 years in prison convicted of being a member of an illegal organization.

İlhanlı was accused of being "Zana's partner" after he opened a shopping center in Istanbul called "D'Silva" amid much fanfare in March 2007. The center, which took its "D" from Diyarbakır and the rest from Silvan,

shopping center executives draped the façade of the center with a 65-meter-long Turkish flag, only to be "visited" by police officers who told them the "dimensions and placement" of the crescent and the star were against the law.

The last nail

After this unpleasant visit, the center was then hit by a hoax bomb threat, which was enough to scare away what was left of the customers and shop owners. "My total loss amounted to 20 million Turkish Liras," İlhanlı said. "We are still recovering from that. If it wasn't for China, I would have been bankrupted 50 times."

As he was accused of being a separatist Kurd in İstanbul, his community in Diyarbakır also was not happy. "Everybody told me I got what I deserved for not opening the center in Diyarbakır," İlhanlı said. "So, I was basically between a rock and a hard place."

After irrecoverable losses, İlhanlı had to change the shopping center's name to "Fox City." Now it is opening clothing stores all around the country under the "Çarşımmın" brand. The brand aims to open 10 stores each year.



RELAY: The Gaziantep EU Information Relay Office started operating in 1996.

EU offices aid women

GAZİANTEP
Anadolu News Agency

European Union information relay offices, which conduct various successful projects in Turkey are focusing particularly on women this year.

The EU information relay office in the southeastern city of Gaziantep undertakes projects to educate women, increase women employment and support women entrepreneurs. This year, the Gaziantep office will establish a chamber for women in a village and educate women on many issues, including health, childcare, handwork and entrepreneurship. Moreover, women organizations and non-governmental bodies will be informed about "gender equality policies, EU women employment policies, gender agenda in Europe, women and politics" during the Gaziantep Workshop, which will be held June 9-11 with the collaboration of the Trans-European Policy Studies Association and the Center for European Studies of the Middle East Technical University.



RESOURCE: Yenibiris.com constantly creates projects to develop its curriculum vitae bank.

Yenibiris.com acquires rival resources site

ISTANBUL
Anadolu News Agency

Business and human resources portal yenibiris.com has acquired insankeynaklari.com, whose portal name means "human resources" in Turkish.

With the acquisition, yenibiris.com has increased the number of entries registered on its curriculum vitae bank to 10 million, according to a written statement released by yenibiris.com on Wednesday.

Through this merger, the portal, which already has over 50,000 corporate members, has become "the business and human resources site with the widest curriculum vitae bank in Turkey."

The Web site insankeynaklari.com, which was founded and developed under a leading auditing and consulting institution, continued its operations as the business partner of Milliyet İnsan Kaynakları Gazetesi, the human resources supplement of daily Milliyet, said Deniz Ceylan Kılıçoğlu, managing director of yenibiris.com. Through projects in recent years, the site, whose individual members consist largely of senior executives and individuals who work in banking, construction and textile, attracts the activity of youth and recent graduates, said Kılıçoğlu. Timeliness and quality of curriculum vitae banks are among the most important criterion of success, he said, adding that the recent merger has brought significant acceleration to the site's growth.

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* The 'sectors' page of HürriyetDN is the venue of our weekly exploration of the deeper dynamics in Turkey's economy