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Jean Ginzburg

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Jul 2 · 6 min read

"Get Help Early From a Mastermind" The 5 Lessons I Learned Being a 20-Something Founder



I had the pleasure of interviewing Roosevelt Purification the CEO & Founder of Roosevelt Games, LLC and the author of 5 Pillars of Success. He started his first business when he was 17 years old and has worked with organizations like NASA, the Department of Education, The Agora and many others.

Jean: Thank you so much for doing this with us! What is your “backstory” of how you become a founder?

Ever since I was a kid, I liked the idea of owning my own business. I am not sure it is a natural gift, or I picked up subconsciously, but I never liked the idea of doing just a regular job. I felt that I can do much more for others if I had the freedom to run my own business as well.

Jean: What do you think makes your company stand out? Can you share a story?

Roosevelt Games is a dream project of mine. I prepared myself for this company for over ten years. I didn't have a plan to execute after ten years, but when I look back, I realized that everything I have done and accomplished so far, was revolved around running this company.

When I was 13 years old, I loved playing a video game called Black & White by Lionhead Studios. The game was so addicting for me that I wanted to create a fansite for it. Since I was young, I didn't have the money to even pay for a \$10 domain name, let alone the web hosting costs back then was a bit higher as well. My parents didn't understand that, and they worked hard to earn their money, so, they spent every penny after careful calculation.

As a result, I learned that I'm on my own if I have to make my dreams a reality. So, I picked up a book on web design at the local library, taught myself HTML and programming to build my fansite for that video game. I ran that website for a couple of years and mostly stayed home building it up.

Since, I learned HTML, PHP, and other programming languages by the time I was 16; I decided to start a software company. I wanted to make games, but back then game programming or game design looked very daunting to me. So, I took the easy route and decided to write my web applications and sell them. The company was RCMS-Pro. From that business, I was making over \$2,000 per month. As a 17-year-old, making that much money was more than convenient!

I didn't know anything about running a business and was running my software company entirely on my gut feeling or copying others. After the market changed, it made it difficult, and I started to see my earnings drop. So, after finishing high school, I decided to get an actual job. I was lucky to get a job at Vantage Systems, Inc. They get their contracts from NASA GSFC, and I was fortunate to learn from them and gain early exposure to NASA, and they helped me hone my skills as a skilled programmer and a developer.

I tried to do various things in between, but nothing satisfied me. Then one day, I saw an ad for Buildbox.com. I already was aware of other game engines but the drag and drop, and easy to use design and also the videos Trey Smith (founder of Buildbox) was putting out intrigued me. So, I used their software to make my first video game, and I was hooked! I learned very quickly that Buildbox isn't strong enough to support my vision and the type of games I have in mind. So, I taught myself Unreal Engine, 3D Modeling / Animation and decided to start Roosevelt Games and never looked back!

I believe that Roosevelt Games is based on the foundation to change someone's life for the better. I loved playing video games and loved it so much that I wanted to make a fansite for it. All these small decisions, lead me to learn new technologies, exposed me to NASA, start a dream business and allowed me to give my family a wonderful life today. So, for me, video games is not just games or a way to pass the time. It is a medium through which you can learn, grow and gain valuable skills that will help you in real life!

Jean: Are you working on any exciting projects now?

Roosevelt Games is currently working on its first official title, "Priyanka Chopra vs. The Zombies." This game is an action-packed game featuring the Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra and lots of zombies! The gamers can expect to play this game on their favorite Android and iOS devices very soon. We are also exploring Virtual Reality and would love to publish a VR version as well.

Jean: Do you have a favorite book that made a deep impact on your life? Can you share a story?

There are a couple of books that changed me as a person or helped me in life. They are Man's Search for Meaning, Unlimited Power by Anthony Robbins, Rich Dad Poor Dad, Think & Grow Rich and Thinkertoys by Michael Michalko.



Jean: What are your “5 Lessons I Learned as a Twentysomething Founder” and why? Please share a story or example for each.

As a twentysomething founder, I'd give myself the following tips if I could roll back time or had a time machine to talk to myself:

A) Nothing is hard. If you can imagine yourself doing something, you achieve that or something similar in real life. You have to practice every day to master whatever challenge you have right now.

B) Read lots of related books. If your goal is to become successful in your business, read lots of relevant books that will support you in your goals. Practical knowledge will save you years of trial and error.

C) Read lots of irrelevant books. Yes, it's important to read the books that are required or relevant to your success. However, I learned that reading books on various subjects also help you gain different perspectives and gives you different ideas that you can implement in your business.

D) Get help early, form a mastermind. As an entrepreneur, you might feel that you have to do everything on your own. However, you could be limiting your growth and your company's growth. Being a jack of all trades might help you keep the wheels running, but if you hire specialists for each task, you will save time and achieve your goals faster.

E) Take your time, don't rush. I made the mistake of rushing into many things and wanted quick results. That didn't end well, and I had debts, lost opportunities and was burned out. Focus on your goal and keep at it. You WILL achieve it!

Jean: Some of the biggest names in Business, VC funding, Sports, and Entertainment read this column. Is there a person in the world, or in the US whom you would love to have a private breakfast or lunch with, and why? He or she might see this. :-)

I'd love to have a breakfast or lunch with Anthony Robbins. He is an extraordinary man and the self-help things he created helped me take care of myself when I was in High School, College and even now. Some of his principles allow me to see things from a different perspective and always forces me to hold myself to a higher standard. So, I'd love to meet him!

— Published on June 27, 2018

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