

Starting your own business “Look out of any window...”

By Jill Matlow, Wall Street Dead aHead Family Member



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In 1990, a family friend named Philip* was staring out his office window when he spotted a cruise ship. Unhappy with his present job, he did some soul-searching and shortly thereafter, resigned from his position and founded OnBoard Media, a port-marketing company for the cruise industry. Twenty-three years later, Philip would become the Mayor of Miami Beach. Talk about high aspirations! He dared to dream, took a risk and followed his bliss.

*(*Fun fact: Philip's mother Diane fixed up my parents Jackie and Ted, who are still going strong after 60+ years of marriage.)*

Perhaps you don't have political aspirations like Philip (*or matchmaking skills like his mother Diane*), but have you ever found yourself staring out your office window wishing you could be working anywhere else but your current job? Daydreaming is okay, but when you spend most of your workday wishing you were elsewhere, it becomes emotionally draining. At that point, I think it's time to do some serious soul-searching.

What is holding *you* back?

I often wondered why some people are motivated to unchain the golden handcuffs and start their own ventures, while others stay put, resigning themselves to jobs they hate. Do you think that some people are born with an entrepreneurial gene while others are not? Or could an entrepreneurial mindset be learned and adapted over time from studying others?

There are a handful of common characteristics shared by entrepreneurs: self-starters, disciplined, risk-takers and competitive—all exhibited by well-known entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk and Walt Disney—to name a few. Other entrepreneurs like Deborah Solomon, Founder of Wall Street Dead aHead Networking Events®, identified a specific niche. After networking with colleagues at Grateful Dead shows, Deb realized that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” and the rest is history.

I discovered that many of my fellow WSDaH Family members have also started their own businesses, as they too decided to take a risk in order to follow their dreams. Perhaps you’ll find some inspiration after reading their stories:

“My career started in a typical, boring manner—a few years in private industry followed by a few years with small CPA firms. After several years in Florida, I moved back to NY and joined the KPMG tax department, advancing from Supervising Senior to Senior Manager. With two kids at home, I became their first tax manager to work flex hours.

I realized I had diverse experience and didn’t need to drive an hour each way, dodging deer on back roads. I had worked with expatriate programs, foreign owned corporations, middle market clients, foundations, trusts, and individuals. Establishing a client base would require guts and luck.

My largest client at KPMG, the importer for Beck’s Beer, was retiring and selling his business back to the Germans. Tax filings for his side investments might generate enough billing and turned out to be an easy yes. Surprisingly, even with a non-compete contract, KPMG referred a number of clients. One of my first clients gave me the best advice— ‘be picky when it comes to clients’ and think about a ‘by invitation only’ policy. Getting to know my clients and letting them know me—music taste and all—generated better referrals than giving a PowerPoint presentation to a room full of strangers. Taking the time to develop relationships goes a long way.

I started volunteering as an usher when The Capitol Theatre reopened. I heard of WSDaH through Facebook and thought, what better way to make connections, than in your happy place? The circle keeps expanding with each annual event, jam session, ladies hang, or at concerts. Strangers spot the t-shirt or backpack and more connections are formed.

When explaining that a tax deadline caused me to be late for my 2nd night as a volunteer usher at the Capitol Theatre, the head usher said, ‘A Deadhead CPA, now that’s a combination you don’t see much’. The cliché is true. Weir everywhere.”

[Nancy G. Tadler, CPA, https://tadtax.com/](https://tadtax.com/)

“I’ve always been an independent thinker and entrepreneur at heart. When I was 12 or 13 years old, my friends and I got involved with baseball cards and speculations on players. We’d go to baseball conventions at hotels in NJ and NY, where I would make \$1,000 on a Sunday, which was incredible for a 13-year-old! Fast forward to college, where I studied TV&Radio, with a minor in History, a path I thought would bring me ‘security’ if I needed to fall back on something.

But I think the baseball card ‘era’ set the wheels in motion for me as I loved making money as well as the strategy and thrill that went along with the speculation.

Over the years, I dabbled in many industries—worked at SNL for a bit behind the scenes, Arista Records (where I was blessed with access to the vault of the GD collection) and the Jon Stewart show. Stand-up comedy was next where someone told me I could use my sense of humor and sales personality to sell stocks, so I worked in a few brokerage firms which were shady and reminiscent of firms portrayed in movies like ‘Boiler Room’. After that, I did some soul searching and realized that the more I worked with people and had a boss, the more I wanted to become independent and be my own boss. Trading on my own led me to develop a website where I could teach people in layman terms what I learned over the years. It was at that time that HittheBid.com was born.

Before it was ‘en vogue’, I was screen sharing information with my audience and prided myself on my 30-day free access policy which helped grow my audience exponentially at HittheBid.com. In the last two years, I’ve really hit my stride, employing more sales staff and interns. One of my new employees had told me about WSDaH, where I met people in the financial industry who shared their expertise with me. The social side of WSDaH has been a great release for me too, especially after a high-energy day at HittheBid.com.

In hindsight, I’m so glad I listened to the little voices in my head, who kept telling me to remain true to myself and follow my bliss. It paid off handsomely in the end.”

Kenny Glick, The Prophet of Profit, www.HittheBid.com

“When I was 23 years old, I started my own business as an artist. My business grew out of a love for live music and a desire to create. Little Hippie was born within a music festival scene that was just then starting to emerge, where I was drawn to the community that was growing with it. Now I have over a decade of experience successfully living life according to my own rules.

I didn’t set out to create a Grateful Dead brand, but when I was offered a licensing contract just a year after getting started, I knew enough to accept the opportunity. Over the years that followed, I evolved my illustration style, creating many designs using the band’s iconic imagery. I developed an original line of merchandise for people of all ages, but particularly for the tiniest among us.

I learned more from the Grateful Dead than any other band out there. Who else has so spectacularly broken the rules and succeeded so gloriously at doing so? They taught me that I could remain independent if I continued to think differently, be innovative, and follow my passion. They taught me that business can be as creative as any art, and most importantly of all, they provided a framework in which I was able to become a professional artist.

As Little Hippie got deeper into our second decade, I diligently brought Little Hippie into the new digital economy, while making great strides in social media marketing innovation, integrating the site with Facebook as well. If you have ordered from our online store, know that it was built with love, by us. Speaking of the Grateful Dead, I became a member of WSDaH, and the exposure to so many professionals who were also Deadheads was fabulous for my business. The members were extremely supportive of Little Hippie. In other words, my 'fan base' was increased, thanks to WSDaH and Deb Solomon's support."

Taylor Swope, Chief Executive Artist, www.littlehippie.com

"I was 14 when I saw my first Dead show at the Boston Garden. Things were rough at home, but I couldn't miss it. Yup, my bro and I ran away to see the Grateful Dead. Ship of Fools tour with Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds opener in the second set. Slept under a bridge that night in downtown Boston. :)

My brother Dusty and I love live music. What we don't love is getting ripped off for tickets. The secondary ticket market is a mess. For us, shows and festivals are life-changing moments. They have meaning. The secondary resale sites ruin that experience before it begins. The lack of transparency, ridiculous prices, and high fees are outrageous. No one wants to feel ripped off for something they love. After watching the ticket industry go from brick-and-mortar box offices to full online platforms, things have changed. Bot programs and sophisticated tech brokers have changed it for us all.

As web developers for nearly 20 years, my brother and I launched CashorTrade.org, the world's first fair trade marketplace where real fans ethically buy, sell, and trade tickets for face value and avoid scalping. Since then, over a quarter million fans from 20 countries have come together to create the face value movement. Now 3,000 new members sign up on CashorTrade.org each month. It's become a social network and has been called the Airbnb of Tickets.

Last year was my first time attending the Wall Street Dead aHead event. It was wonderful. Deb and Rebecca have been inviting and supportive. Being part of the WSDaH family has been a game changer. I have been honored to connect with many amazing people in the industry. We recently closed our seed round of funding and met many great investors and advisors through the community. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter... WSDaH is always with me."

Brando Rich, Founder, <http://cashortrade.org>

Are you feeling stuck in your present job, searching for some inspiration to make a change?
“*Look out of any window, any morning, any evening, any day*”. Maybe *you’ll* find direction just like some fellow WSDaH Family members did many years ago...