

22 Successful Entrepreneurs Share What Inspires Them to Keep Going

There is no one right way to get inspiration. It is deeply personal and derives from what is important to and what drives you. But no matter where you find it, it is often an integral part of what keeps you going when times get tough.

We asked 22 entrepreneurs to open up about the things, actions and people that make them engaged and wanting to make a difference.

Here is what they had to say.

Providing the opportunity to be an entrepreneur to everyone

Name: Harper Reed

Company: [Modest](#) (now PayPal)

Inspiration: The democratization of access, of giving people opportunities. One of the main reasons I was so excited when we sold our company to PayPal is because PayPal has been doing this for a while: giving people access to things only large companies with resources and wealth are able to accomplish. Hearing our CEO speak about these things is inspirational, because he believes that this is a huge part of PayPal.

Read more about Reed: [This Entrepreneur Shares the Most Important Factor of His Success](#)

Hard work throughout the entire company.

Name: Chieh Huang

Company: [Boxed](#)

Inspiration: The folks in our performance centers who do a very difficult job. My life at Boxed started there -- the CEO was packing boxes at the start, too. There are a lot of people counting on us to make the right decisions to make sure that we do well, so they can put food on the table and that inspires me.

Read more about Huang: [The Surprising Reason Why This Founder Says Not to Be Afraid of the Competition](#)

Passionate people

Name: David Perkins

Company: [High West Distillery](#)

Inspiration: Being around passionate people. They are always contagious for me and they get my juices going. And they come from all walks of life, not just famous artists or musicians.

I remember a summer job I had in college where I worked in a warehouse as a puller and packer. It's about the most boring job you could ever imagine. I really liked one of the older guys that worked there as he was super intelligent, and we always had great conversations at lunch. He rode the forklift around with a big smile and would tell me to do my best and be the best at the job I was doing, no matter what. He exuded passion for his job when he was on the warehouse floor. It made everyone feel good. I think of him all the time when I interact with anyone on the job.

Read more about Perkins: [This Founder Ditched His Career at 40 and Turned a Hunch Into Millions](#)

Customer feedback

Name: Heidi Zak

Company: [ThirdLove](#)

Inspiration: I think what inspires me the most are our customers. I specifically set aside time to read customer chats, reading the positive comments of course is awesome, but I also get a lot of value from the things that we can improve on. I read those conversations and get inspired to do things better, change things and develop products based on that feedback. That inspires me every day.

Read more about Zak: [This Founder's Best Advice for Entrepreneurs: To Succeed, Entrepreneurs Need to Get Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable](#)

New opportunities

Name: Jennie Ripps

Company: [Owl's Brew](#)

Inspiration: I am inspired by the fact that every day is a new day. I really think that there is an opportunity in every day, especially when you're building a business. You never know what is going to come, and I get really excited when I wake up.

Read more about Ripps: [The One Thing This Entrepreneur Does Each Day to Stay Productive](#)

Audacious ideas

Name: David Bladow

Company: [BloomThat](#)

Inspiration: I'm really inspired by Elon Musk. I think he gets people to think bigger and shoot for these outlandish feats that are good for humanity. Having people thinking about ideas that are audacious is a good thing to spur people on. I'm not shooting to land people on Mars, but it's good for people in general.

And my grandpa. He was from North Dakota, had an eighth grade education and hopped a boxcar to California to make a success out of himself. He started a couple of furniture stores, and at the peak of his career had 10 stores. He was a guy who started with nothing. I always was inspired by his courage.

Read more about Bladow: *[This Founder Has 3 Simple Tips to Achieve Maximum Productivity](#)*

Getting involved in the community

Name: Jeff Chapin

Company: [Casper](#)

Inspiration: I'm inspired by good citizens, people who contribute to their communities. So much of society relies on good citizens to function, but it's not talked about all that much. They're everywhere in the country, filling holes that our government can't fill. I am blown away by dedicated people helping hold society together.

Read more about Chapin: [Behind a \\$100 Million Mattress Startup, Casper Co-Founder Shares Advice on Finding Success as an Entrepreneur](#)

Empowering others

Name: Gavin Armstrong

Company: [Lucky Iron Fish](#)

Inspiration: Making change and empowering people. I'm a big believer in the power of one -- that one person, one action, can have a ripple effect that can make a difference.

Read more about Armstrong: [This CEO Has Helped Thousands -- and He's Just Getting Started](#)

The world's ability to change

Name: Oliver Kharraz

Company: [Zocdoc](#)

Inspiration: The fact that change is possible. If we look back at what's been achieved in the face of incredible odds, it's amazing. The fact that our forefathers were able to get rid of a well-entrenched dictatorship that had an entire continent for a few thousand years and then establish something new on a concept of mutual checks and balances and understanding of human nature. It set an overwhelming precedent. Compared to that, whatever problems I face seem extremely solvable.

Read more about Kharraz: [This Founder Says to Succeed You Need to Question Everything](#)

Teamwork

Name: Tim Chen

Company: [Nerdwallet](#)

Inspiration: I'm really inspired by the possibility of change and how to seize that. I believe those things start with a combination of proving something is possible, telling the right people about it and then pick up the torch and carry on from there. The right way to think about it is planting the seeds of what is possible and enabling a lot of people to go after it.

Read more about Chen: [Nerdwallet's Founder Shares the Worst Advice He Ever Got](#)

Traveling and getting out of your comfort zone

Name: Kara Goldin

Company: [Hint](#)

Inspiration: One of the reasons I love to travel is because I find new inspiration in each trip I take. When you travel, you not only encounter so many different cultures and ways of life, but you also meet so many new and interesting people who can teach you completely unexpected life lessons and be the inspiration

for your next great idea. I've often come back from a trip with a completely fresh perspective on my business, and it helps me ensure we're always innovating and being creative.

Read more about Goldin: [The Entrepreneur Behind a \\$90 Million Company Shares How You Can Get Past the Naysayers to Build a Successful Business](#)

Working together to solve problems

Name: Bea Fischel-Bock

Company: [Hutch](#)

Inspiration: My co-workers. I know how lucky I am to go into work every day working on a mission and a solution that we all feel so passionately about. I can't think of better inspiration than that.

Read more about Fischel-Bock: [This Founder Shares Why In Order To Learn Fast, You Need to Fail Fast](#)

His team's commitment to one another

Name: Daniel Lubetzky

Company: [KIND](#)

Inspiration: I love how the KIND family works together, with a commitment to each other and to excellence. There's great energy across our team. You can feel it in the hallways of our office, and it inspires me to be better.

Read more about Lubetzky: [How a 9-Year-Old Taught This Super Successful Entrepreneur About Taking Risks](#)

People who lead with both intelligence and humility

Name: Carrie Dorr

Company: [Pure Barre](#)

Inspiration: People who possess great intelligence and depth with an equal amount of humility. That combination is hard to come by. I find it very inspiring to be around people who are trying to live their best lives and evolve mentally and physically.

Read more about Dorr: [This Founder Shares How to Tailor Your Schedule to Fit Your Brain](#)

Courage and friendship

Name: Bastian Lehmann

Company: [Postmates](#)

Inspiration: My mom. She is such a strong woman. She has dealt with her life and raised my brother and me in a remarkable way. Courage is something that drives me and inspires me when I see that in people. Friendship inspires me and being exposed to beautiful things, whether it's on a hike or in a gallery.

Read more about Lehmann: [This Founder Shares the One Trait He Looks for in Every Hire](#)

Being exposed to art and culture

Name: Randi Zuckerberg

Company: [Zuckerberg Media](#)

Inspiration: Definitely art, theater and culture. Anytime that I want to feel inspired I go to the theater. I spent so much time in my life building platforms, and it's easy for techies to forget that platforms are nothing without art to go on them.

Read more about Zuckerberg: [Why Everyone Can Use Randi Zuckerberg's Number One Focus Tip](#)

Honest customer feedback

Name: Jordana Kier

Company: [Lola](#)

Inspiration: I would say our customers. They are so vocal and passionate. They are brutally honest, so they share what they love about our brand, but they also say what they want improved or what they want next. The worst thing we could have is indifference. Feeling the passion -- that's awesome to me and very inspiring.

Read more about Friedman: [How You Can Use Your Computer Password to Make Your Aspirations a Reality](#)

The fortitude of women who came before

Name: Katrina Lake

Company: [Stitch Fix](#)

Inspiration: On my Japanese side, my grandmother. She grew up in Japan and she relocated here, learned English and lived independently in Minnesota. She saw this future for herself and against all odds made it happen.

On my American side, there was my great grandmother. Both she and her sister lost their husbands early in life. They were in this tough situation of both being single moms with multiple kids, and they combined their households and raised a bunch of great kids.

Those examples have always helped me have a wide lens of what's possible in life and to be able to believe in things that might be hard.

Read more about Lake: [Stitch Fix Founder Explains Why the Worst Piece of Advice She Ever Got Was to Raise A Lot of Money](#)

Giving people the tools to learn

Name: Luis von Ahn

Company: [Duolingo](#)

Inspiration: That has changed over time. At first what inspired me was to work on hard technological problems. I didn't particularly care about the impact, I just wanted to solve difficult problems. Now, the main thing that inspires me is the impact something can have. With Duolingo, what inspires me is our mission: trying to give people language education.

Read more about von Ahn: [Why This Founder Says the Worst Advice He Ever Got Was to Listen to His Users](#)

Making women's lives easier

Name: Tracy DiNunzio

Company: [Tradesy](#)

Inspiration: Our customers and team. I don't know how I got so lucky to have them all in my life. I think knowing that we're touching millions of women and making their lives a little easier, a little more affordable, empowering them to look and feel the way they want is endlessly inspiring.

And then watching our team learn and grow, get better, get stronger and be the talented and incredible people they are, just makes it exciting to come to work every day.

Read more about DiNunzio: [This Successful Entrepreneur Shares The Trick That Helps Her Tell The Difference Between Being Productive and Being Busy](#)

Constantly working to make the world better

Name: Alexa von Tobel

Company: [LearnVest](#)

Inspiration: I believe that we were put on this earth to make the world a better place, and I believe that if we are capable of making the world around us better,

we should. So, I think what inspires me is this deep belief that every day the world can be better -- and to raise the bar of the standard of living for people.

Read more about Tobel: [This Entrepreneur Shares Her Surprising Secret to Fighting Decision Fatigue](#)

The power of nature

Name: Tina Sharkey

Company: [Brandless](#)

Inspiration: Nature. I live right by a redwood forest, and I'm inspired by trees, the power of nature and the reminder that we are just a small speck of sand in the larger universe. It puts everything in perspective.

Read more about Sharkey: [This Successful Entrepreneur Shares How to Find Opportunity Where It Seemingly Doesn't Exist](#)