

# FOUNDER FINDER

A personal honesty audit for startup leaders



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|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 Right timing?             | <input type="radio"/> 8 Perspective?           | <input type="radio"/> 15 Founder strength?    |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 Good health?              | <input type="radio"/> 9 Dance with ambiguity?  | <input type="radio"/> 16 Quiet ambition?      |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 True grit?                | <input type="radio"/> 10 Fleernability?        | <input type="radio"/> 17 Accountability?      |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 Kick-arse business model? | <input type="radio"/> 11 Keen student?         | <input type="radio"/> 18 Stayability?         |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 Discipline?               | <input type="radio"/> 12 Business sensibility? | <input type="radio"/> 19 Hell, yeah! product? |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 Deep care?                | <input type="radio"/> 13 Partnership mindset?  | <input type="radio"/> 20 Luck and timing?     |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 Total pro?                | <input type="radio"/> 14 Smart team?           | <input type="radio"/> = Startup nirvana       |

But **don't wait for perfect**. Start building today.



- 1 **Right timing?** Is the timing right personally for you to be a founder? It can be a tough gig. Are you personally in a position where you're stable and strong so you can go the distance? It's not limited to these things but they're the minimum: time to do the mountain of work, food on the table, a bed to sleep in (it doesn't have to be yours!), some way to pay the bills, a few key supportive relationships and a tiny bit of spare cash for beers (or cake in my case) with friends when you need to pop the pressure valve. The rest is a bonus.



- 2 **Good health?** Sugar-fizz, coffee, sleep deprivation and pizza are startup staples but go easy or it'll be hard to have the clarity you need to navigate the commercial woods before your runway disappears. A great business relies on a strong foundation and that includes your personal foundation of health (physical, mental, emotional).



- 3 **True grit?** Have you been through something in life that you initially felt was insurmountable but you survived or thrived using your creativity, resourcefulness, connections or determination (likely all four)? You'll experience this numerous times in startup life and it's one to befriend, not fear.

*'Grit is sticking with your future — day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years — and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint.'*

Angela Lee Duckworth



- 4 **Kick-arse business model?** Do you have a real plan for how you're going to make this sustainable on every level?



- 5 **Discipline?** I'm sure you've heard the rumours about startups being hard work. They're true. Passion can make hard work seem effortless. But lack of discipline leads to lack of focus and that's costly. Do you love tackling the work that will give you the greatest result?



- 6 **Deep care?** Do you have an authentic connection to the problem you're trying to solve? It's hard to ride the tough times without it. An 'authentic connection' has nothing to do with thinking you can cash in quick. It's about caring in a way that will drive you to explore the solution from a new and meaningful perspective. This is very different from self-belief and self-confidence – you need those too.



7 **Total pro?** Are you committed to being a total pro? Actors have to 'play the part' no matter what's going on in their personal life. Entrepreneurs often have to dig deep and do the same. Meltdowns and tough times are inevitable but choose your forum for these carefully.



8 **Perspective?** Every entrepreneur needs their family and friends through the inevitable ups and downs. Treat them like gold. It may seem like your business partners and customers are the primary focus of your life when you're in startup mode but they're only one piece of the happy chocolate bar of life. Keep perspective and time for good friends that are 'in the game' and those who aren't. You'll need both.



9 **Dance with ambiguity?** Can you work alongside uncertainty, ambiguity and the real risk of failure? The mental strength needed to dance with these emotions is handy.



10 **Flearnability?** Can you replace ego with empathy and flearn (fail + learn) your way through this? Will you take feedback from customers, partners, investors and mentors and reshape yourself or the business on that wisdom when it makes sense to do so?



11 **Keen student?** This was my learning from the hundreds of incense-burning yoga classes of my life. Be a student, not a guru. Keep an open mind, stay in the moment, be ready to learn, stretch and go somewhere new. Entrepreneurs need to do the same - but go easy on the Sandalwood at the office (my son tells me it smells like vomit).



12 **Business sensibility?** Do you understand the metrics, numbers, legals and everything else that is the foundation of a strong business? Do you have great suppliers in place to help you with the bits that aren't your core talent? Flakey foundations can lead to unnecessary early failure.



13 **Partnership mindset?** Whether you hire it in or align yourself with other talent, building a team of complementary talent is key. This isn't a solo sport.



14 **Smart team?** Are you prepared to be the least talented person in the room at a team or mentor meeting? Are you willing to be wrong? To listen? Evolve?



- 15 **Founder strength?** Do you know and trust your co-founders? Do you handle conflict well? Have you been through multiple tough times together and communicated your way through it to smart outcomes? Are you different enough in your skill set to execute well yet similar enough in your value set to build a strong relationship of trust?



- 16 **Quiet ambition?** Yes, you'll need some. It's the thing that helps you do the unreasonable when everyone else is happy with comfortable. Innovation is unreasonable.



- 17 **Accountability?** Can you be your word and deliver great work consistently? Are you willing to 'find a way' through, over, around or under the challenges and hurdles you'll face?



- 18 **Stayability?** They say the definition of success is being knocked down five times and getting up six. Get up on number six and keep dancing. That's the magic.



- 19 **Hell, yeah! product?** Are strangers interested in this and saying 'hell, yeah – I want that!' when you pitch it? Pursue that response and passion and don't give up until you find it. Or pivot.



- 20 Add to that a dash of **luck and market-timing** (actually, a good slosh of it) and you're close to startup nirvana.



But remember, **life isn't perfect** and if we don't fall we don't learn how to get up. Art would not exist if every artist waited to tick all of these boxes before they began. Get started today anyway. Seriously, get going. Build your thing. It's a beautiful way to show yourself how awesome you really are.

- ✓ **Petrina Buckley** is a co-founder of Credosity ([www.credosity.com](http://www.credosity.com)) – a business-writing innovation for Microsoft Office documents – and co-founder of Magneto Communications ([www.magneto.net.au](http://www.magneto.net.au)). Credosity helps create capable communicators who lead action, drive change, connect meaningfully with others and create a positive workplace culture.