

## TWENTY-NINE: ENDINGS AND ENTREPRENEURS

As Christmas rolled around my girlfriend and I were both unhappy. Four friends flew in from Halifax to stay with us, and there were about twenty family members over on Christmas day. Buying things for my girlfriend in the past had always been so easy. I would always feel so much love when I'd pick something out and give it to her. Suddenly, I didn't feel that anymore. I didn't feel anything. I told myself, just get through to the end of the month and, when everyone had left, we could talk.

But when the end of the month came, I couldn't do it.

Time moved on. I continued living a relationship lie. Then, one night, we were lying in bed and I could hear her click\_click\_click texting on her Blackberry. Whenever she would text, it would give me the worst anxiety. I turned over and explained how relationships were about needs being met. I said I had stopped meeting her needs a long time ago and now mine weren't being met either.

We broke up.

She cried for about four hours. I didn't feel anything; not even sad or depressed. I had to face my fear about not finding someone who accepted me the way she did. After everything I had put her through, she still really loved me. The next day, she told me she was saving money so

she could move out and get her own place. I don't know if this was something she told me out of anger or if it was reality. It didn't matter; the next step was finding her a place to live. I still cared a lot about her. I wanted to ensure that I supported her leaving. We found a brand-new condo for her, and I paid the damage deposit along with the first month's rent. I bought a microwave and got her a TV for her bedroom. That was it.

We were both keen on the idea of remaining friends; I think if we'd broken up at any other point in our relationship, that wouldn't have been the case.

I continued to pursue my career.

XYZ Media turned out to be a huge fraud. In 2008 it blew up. I was laid off and went back to the TV store. I kept building my business on the side—except there's no such thing as building a business on the side. Either you're an entrepreneur or not.

I had a lot to learn. Kijiji was a great place to meet people; I'd respond to ads looking for video services production. I got a gig hosting and producing segments for a Vancouver media company. They had a TV show about Canadian athletes competing in the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. While that was going on, I responded to another ad: VIDEOGRAPHER WANTED. FULL-TIME. \$1800/month. I replied to the ad and explained there was no way I could work full-time for that money, but that we should open a dialogue. I assured them that I could meet their

needs without full-time commitment. We talked and two days later I was filming a birthday for a bunch of rich people. While I was there, I was interviewed by some entrepreneurs, and they asked me what I did. I explained my part-time position and my hourly rate for production services.

“Time is money,” said one of the entrepreneurs. That seemed logical to me.

I was asked to videotape an Entrepreneur Bootcamp one weekend and I ditched the retail electronics job for the day—Boxing Day. My boss was not pleased, but I didn’t care. I was a top earner. And my passion was calling. I was full-on career-minded which left my personal life a bit empty.

In the spring of 2009, I landed a production deal—finally—to make videos every month. I would follow the Alberta Solar Decathlon team to their international competition. Team Alberta was one of twenty teams competing. They wanted to make promotional videos every couple of weeks to show what was going on with the construction of the home they’d endeavoured to build. Not only was I going to make videos, but I was going to turn this thing into a TV show. I voiced the intro and outro to the show we called Solar Hero. By episode eight, we were ready to go to Washington DC to compete against companies like Germany, Puerto Rico, and be measured against various schools throughout the United

States. In order to be present on the construction site, we had to have steel-toed boots. Video producer or not, I was forced to conform to these rules. I got on the train and went out on an adventure to find some boots, in Washington.

On the way to find those boots I saw a cute twenty-something wearing a flowery dress and sandals. I think her name was Alex. She had curly hair.

“Hey, do you know where to find a mall?” I asked.

“I’m looking for a mall, too!” she said.

We spent the afternoon shopping for clothes for her new internship at a Smithsonian Museum and looking for steel-toed boots.

“Wanna get some wine?” I asked.

“Sure,” she said.

Now, the daytime game had always been something I could do, but I didn’t know how to label it. I was just a natural. Later that evening, we were making out in the club after two jugs of Sangria and some tasty tapas.

When I came back from the bathroom, she was dancing with another guy. So, I grabbed my steel-toed boots that I’d hidden under a couch downstairs in the club and went back to my hotel. I didn’t bother getting her phone or email address.

I knew I was going to be in Washington for about three weeks, so I called Knox and asked him to fly down. I don't remember much of the next few nights. After the debauchery, he got an ear infection and went home. For me, it was time to finally do some work. I wasn't being paid in the conventional way to be there, so the work had gotten put off. I guess producing videos was like the daytime game for me. I'd show up on-site for an hour, get some key interviews, go back to the hotel, edit the video and post it online.

Technology was amazing. Within six hours, the local newspaper back in Calgary was promoting our videos on their website to show everyone how the team was doing. It was a window into our project of opportunity. We had an evening at the Canadian Embassy with some government dignitaries and project sponsors. I had two hours to shake the right hands.

I guess I did because, when I got home, the Alberta Film Commissioner called me and I qualified for the maximum grant. The team finished sixth in the competition and my video reality series was now going to be translated into a documentary.

The last couple of days of the trip I got really sick, and the flight home was terrible. I didn't leave my bed for two days. The guy I was rooming with in DC was staying another week to tear down the house—he came down with H1N1. I don't think I had that, but I had never been



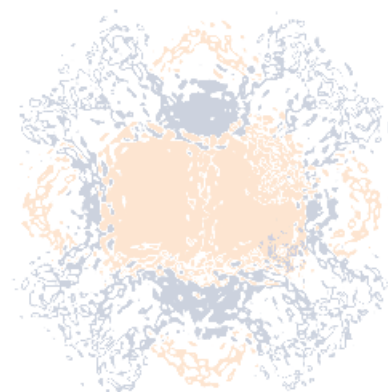
that sick before. Maybe it was my resistance to going back to the Electronic Retailer. There was no going back. I was now a TV Producer. Or at least chasing that possibility.

I embraced entrepreneurship. At the time, my monthly net expenses were four thousand dollars. I was convinced that as long as I could make that, I would be okay.

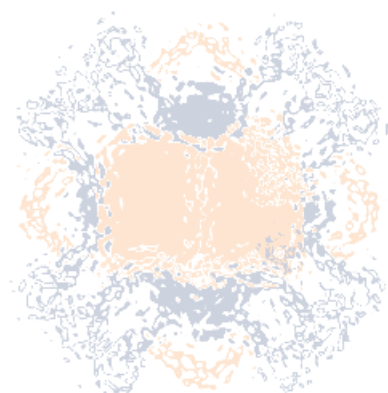
So, I left The TV Store and never looked back. The terror I felt when I decided to leave was pretty intense. I didn't know where the money was going to come from, but I had some great business coaches to guide me along.

The entrepreneurs from the birthday party and the boot camp wanted some help with their branding and video production. I sent in a proposal to cover twelve months' worth of work. Finally, after weeks of anticipation, I had a meeting with the two guys. They asked me to step outside so they could discuss the proposal. It was winter. I walked up and down the street in the freezing cold for about ten minutes. My thought process at this point was maybe I wouldn't get the full budget, but maybe I would get a significant portion of it.

When I went back in, they said that I still had a lot of 'employee residue' and that hiring me on a twelve-month contract was counterproductive to their vision. I didn't leave the breakfast with a cheque like I had hoped, but I did have a fresh outlook.



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