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Issue 1

TEENFINCA®

Entrepreneur

For youth interested in entrepreneurship



Compassion - Two perspectives

Four entrepreneurs showcase compassion

Profile - StudioHawke | Ten tips for teens



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COMPASSION - TWO PERSPECTIVES



Compassion enables entrepreneurs to recognise the needs, challenges, and motivations of others, thereby strengthening trust and long-term relationships

ARGUMENT 1: ENTREPRENEURS SHOULD SHOW COMPASSION

Compassion is a critical attribute for entrepreneurs because businesses do not operate in isolation from people; they are fundamentally human systems involving employees, customers, suppliers, and communities. Compassion enables entrepreneurs to recognise the needs, challenges, and motivations of others, thereby strengthening trust and long-term relationships. In modern business environments, where reputation and brand perception are increasingly influential, compassionate leadership can be a powerful strategic asset rather than a purely moral stance.

From an internal perspective, compassionate entrepreneurs tend to foster healthier workplace cultures. Employees who feel understood and supported are more likely to demonstrate loyalty, engagement, and discretionary effort. This can lead to reduced staff turnover, lower recruitment and training costs, and higher productivity. Compassionate responses during personal hardship, economic uncertainty, or organisational change can reinforce psychological safety, encouraging innovation and honest communication—both essential for entrepreneurial growth.

Compassion also enhances decision-making quality. Entrepreneurs who consider the broader human consequences of their choices are less likely to pursue short-term gains that damage long-term viability. For example, fair treatment of customers and ethical dealings with suppliers can lead to repeat business and resilient supply chains. Compassionate entrepreneurs are often more attuned to social needs and unmet problems, which can directly inspire innovation and new market opportunities. Many successful ventures originate from an empathetic understanding of customer pain points rather

than purely financial analysis.

Externally, compassion contributes to social legitimacy. Entrepreneurs operate within communities and economic ecosystems that increasingly expect corporate responsibility. Demonstrating compassion through fair pricing, ethical labour practices, or community engagement can differentiate a business in competitive markets. Consumers, particularly younger demographics, are more inclined to support businesses aligned with their values. Compassion therefore becomes part of value creation, not a distraction from it.

Importantly, compassion does not imply weakness or poor discipline. It can coexist with accountability, performance standards, and commercial realism. A compassionate entrepreneur can still make difficult decisions, including restructuring or exiting unviable markets, while communicating transparently and treating stakeholders with dignity. In this sense, compassion enhances leadership credibility.

In sum, compassion strengthens trust, supports sustainable growth, and aligns entrepreneurial success with long-term societal value. Rather than limiting business outcomes, compassion can be a catalyst for resilience, innovation, and enduring competitive advantage.

ARGUMENT 2: COMPASSION MAY LIMIT OPPORTUNITIES AND BUSINESS GROWTH

While compassion is ethically appealing, excessive or poorly applied compassion can constrain entrepreneurial effectiveness and business growth. Entrepreneurship often requires hard decisions, rapid execution, and a strong focus on outcomes. In highly competitive environments, prioritising compassion over commercial discipline may reduce agility and weaken strategic



From a strategic perspective, compassion may restrict risk-taking.

One key risk is compromised decision-making. Entrepreneurs may retain underperforming employees, continue unprofitable partnerships, or delay necessary restructuring due to emotional considerations.

These decisions can drain resources, reduce morale among high-performing staff, and ultimately threaten business survival. Markets reward efficiency, speed, and clarity; compassion-driven hesitation can create missed opportunities or allow competitors to gain advantage.

Compassion can also blur accountability. When entrepreneurs consistently soften consequences for poor performance, they risk eroding standards and creating entitlement cultures. Over time, this may reduce productivity and innovation, as individuals learn that outcomes are secondary to intentions.

For early-stage ventures with limited capital, tolerance of inefficiency can be particularly damaging. Cash flow constraints often leave little room for prolonged support or second chances.

From a strategic perspective, compassion may restrict risk-taking. Entrepreneurs who are overly concerned about stakeholder discomfort may avoid bold moves such as market exits, automation, or disruptive pricing strategies. However, growth frequently depends on such decisions.

Innovation can displace existing roles, suppliers, or business models, and excessive compassion may result in strategic inertia rather than progress.

There is also a risk of exploitation. In negotiations, partnerships, or customer relationships, a reputation for high compassion can be leveraged by others seeking favourable terms. Entrepreneurs

who consistently prioritise empathy may struggle to enforce contracts, collect debts, or assert boundaries, leading to financial leakage and operational strain.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial responsibility includes safeguarding the long-term viability of the enterprise. If compassion towards individuals undermines the sustainability of the organisation, the broader group—employees, customers, and investors—may ultimately be worse off. In this sense, restraint rather than compassion may serve the greater good.

Therefore, while compassion has moral value, unmoderated compassion can dilute focus, reduce competitiveness, and constrain growth. Entrepreneurs must be cautious that empathy does not override strategic clarity, financial discipline, and decisive leadership.

Compassion in entrepreneurship is neither inherently beneficial nor inherently harmful; its impact depends on balance and context.

When integrated with accountability and strategic discipline, compassion can strengthen trust and sustainability. When allowed to override commercial judgment, it may limit growth and opportunity.

Effective entrepreneurs calibrate compassion carefully, ensuring it supports rather than undermines long-term success. **T**

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ENTREPRENEURS: COMPASSION

MUHAMMED YUNUS (BANGLADESH) ANITA RODDICK (UK)

JESSICA JACKLEY (USA)

MELANIE PERKINS (AUSTRALIA)



Muhammad Yunus is widely regarded as a pioneer of compassionate entrepreneurship through his development of microfinance and the founding of Grameen Bank. His business model was built on the belief that poverty is not caused by poor people, but by systems that exclude them. Yunus identified that traditional banks viewed the poor—particularly women—as unbankable due to lack of collateral. Rather than accepting this assumption, he designed a lending model rooted in trust, community accountability, and social uplift.

Grameen Bank provides small loans to individuals living in poverty, enabling them to start micro-enterprises such as farming, weaving, or small retail activities. The model replaces physical collateral with social collateral, using group lending structures that encourage mutual support and responsibility. This approach reflects compassion by recognising the dignity, capability, and potential of people traditionally excluded from economic participation.

Crucially, Yunus demonstrated that compassion and financial sustainability are not mutually exclusive. Grameen Bank achieved high repayment rates and long-term viability, challenging the belief that socially focused enterprises must sacrifice financial discipline. Yunus later expanded this approach into “social businesses,” which aim to solve social problems while being financially self-sustaining, reinvesting profits rather than maximising shareholder returns.

Yunus’s compassion is also evident in his emphasis on empowerment rather than dependency. Borrowers are not treated as charity recipients but as entrepreneurs capable of improving their own circumstances. This distinction reinforces autonomy, confidence, and long-term resilience. Through microfinance and social enterprise, Yunus reshaped global thinking about entrepreneurship, proving that compassion can be embedded structurally into a business model while delivering measurable economic and social outcomes.

Image: Sydney Peace Foundation



Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, demonstrated compassion by embedding ethical responsibility, human rights, and environmental sustainability directly into her company’s operating model. At a time when corporate social responsibility was largely peripheral, Roddick made it central to identity and strategy.

The Body Shop pioneered ethical sourcing through its Community Trade programme, which partnered with marginalised producers around the world to provide fair wages, safe working conditions, and long-term economic security. This approach reflected compassion not as charity, but as fairness in exchange. Suppliers were treated as partners, not cost centres.

Roddick was also a vocal advocate for causes such as animal welfare, environmental protection, and human rights. Importantly, she used the commercial platform of her business to educate consumers and influence public debate. Compassion was therefore outward-facing as well as operational, shaping both how the business functioned and what it stood for.

Critically, Roddick rejected the idea that profit and principle were incompatible. The Body Shop grew into a global brand, demonstrating that values-driven businesses could compete at scale.

Anita Roddick’s legacy shows that compassion can be a deliberate strategic choice—one that differentiates a business, builds trust, and aligns commercial success with broader social purpose. She believed businesses had a moral obligation to speak out on social and environmental issues, even when doing so involved commercial risk. The Body Shop actively campaigned against animal testing, supported Indigenous land rights, and raised awareness of domestic violence and refugee issues—long before such positions were considered mainstream. By aligning activism with commerce, she reframed the role of entrepreneurs as agents of social change, demonstrating that ethical courage and commercial success need not be mutually exclusive.

Image: The Roddick Foundation



Jessica Jackley is the co-founder of Kiva, a global crowdfunding platform designed to connect lenders with entrepreneurs in underserved communities. Her work is grounded in the belief that people experiencing poverty are capable, creative, and deserving of opportunity when given access to financial resources.

Kiva’s model allows individuals to lend small amounts of money to entrepreneurs around the world, fostering a sense of human connection rather than anonymous charity. Compassion is central to this design: lenders see the faces and stories behind the loans, while borrowers are treated as partners rather than beneficiaries.

Jackley has consistently emphasised humility and listening as core entrepreneurial skills. She has spoken openly about the importance of questioning assumptions, learning from local communities, and acknowledging power imbalances. This reflective approach has shaped Kiva’s ethical framework and operational practices.

Importantly, Kiva operates as a non-profit but applies rigorous business principles to ensure transparency, scalability, and impact. Compassion is therefore combined with accountability and data-driven decision-making. The platform has facilitated millions of loans globally, demonstrating that empathy-based models can achieve scale without sacrificing integrity.

Jackley’s work highlights how compassion can reshape financial systems, humanise economic exchange, and expand access to opportunity through innovative entrepreneurial design.

Jessica Jackley has also emphasised the importance of dignity in storytelling. She cautioned against portraying borrowers as victims, advocating instead for narratives that highlight capability, resilience, and aspiration. This ethical framing reflects a compassionate commitment to respect, ensuring that financial inclusion empowers individuals without reinforcing stereotypes or dependency.

Image: Washington Speakers Bureau



Melanie Perkins, the Australian co-founder and CEO of Canva, exemplifies compassionate entrepreneurship through her commitment to accessibility, inclusion, and shared prosperity. From its inception, Canva was designed to reduce barriers to design, empowering individuals and organisations who lacked technical skills or financial resources. This founding insight reflects a compassionate understanding of exclusion in digital and creative economies.

Canva’s core product philosophy is grounded in democratisation. By offering a powerful free tier alongside paid subscriptions, the platform enables students, teachers, small businesses, and community organisations to communicate professionally without prohibitive costs. This approach prioritises broad social utility over immediate profit maximisation, while still supporting sustainable growth.

Perkins has also embedded compassion into Canva’s internal culture. The company places strong emphasis on employee wellbeing, psychological safety, and purpose-driven work. Staff are encouraged to align their professional efforts with Canva’s mission to “empower the world to design,” reinforcing a shared sense of meaning rather than purely transactional employment.

Beyond product and workplace design, Perkins has demonstrated compassion through significant wealth redistribution commitments. Alongside her co-founders, she pledged the majority of her equity to philanthropic initiatives focused on reducing global inequality. This decision reframes entrepreneurial success as a responsibility rather than an endpoint.

Melanie Perkins represents a distinctly Australian model of compassionate entrepreneurship—pragmatic, inclusive, and globally oriented. Her leadership demonstrates how businesses can expand economic opportunity, invest in human capability, and pursue growth while remaining grounded in social responsibility.

Image: Asia Pacific Entrepreneur

PROFILE: HARRY SANDERS (STUDIOHAWKE)



Harry Sanders is an Australian entrepreneur who founded StudioHawk, a digital marketing and SEO agency, at a young age. Originally from Melbourne, Sanders taught himself search engine optimisation as a teenager and subsequently launched his first business focused on helping companies improve their online search visibility.

By his early twenties, StudioHawk had grown to employ more than 80 staff and serve clients around Australia and internationally, establishing itself as one of the largest SEO consultancies in the country. His success story—from self-taught teenager to leader of a significant tech services business—has captured media and public attention, particularly because it defies conventional expectations about age and business capability.

The Venture: StudioHawk

StudioHawk specialises in search engine optimisation (SEO), helping businesses increase their visibility in search engines like Google, attract more organic website traffic, and convert that traffic into customers. This involves strategic content planning, technical SEO improvements, analytics, and ongoing performance optimisation. Under Sanders's leadership, the company expanded its team and client base, serving businesses ranging from startups to established corporations seeking to strengthen their digital footprint.

The core value proposition of StudioHawk is grounded in measurable impact. In an era where digital presence is directly tied to competitive advantage, Sanders's firm offers a service that empowers organisations to grow and remain relevant. His youthful status as founder also resonates with younger clients and employees who see his leadership as an example of what is possible without the traditional hierarchical progression from entry-level staff to executive roles.

Challenges Facing Sanders and StudioHawk

Despite his success, Sanders faces several significant challenges common to young founders, as well as some that are unique to his personal and entrepreneurial journey:

1. Sustaining Growth and Differentiation

Digital marketing is a highly competitive sector, with many agencies vying for client attention. Staying ahead requires

continuous investment in talent, technology, and innovative SEO approaches that can adapt to changing search algorithms and client expectations.

2. Leadership at a Young Age

Leading a team of seasoned professionals can be challenging for a founder who is still relatively young. Throughout his leadership, Sanders must balance authority with collaboration and ensure that StudioHawk's culture supports both innovation and professional development for staff at all levels.

3. Reputation and Social Responsibility

Sanders's personal background, including lived experience of homelessness as a teenager, informs his public profile and lends authenticity to his advocacy work. However, navigating public attention while managing a growing organisation demands a careful balancing of entrepreneurial ambition with social stewardship.

Opportunities for Growth and Impact

Sanders's trajectory also presents significant opportunities:

1. Market Expansion

As businesses increasingly invest in digital transformation, demand for SEO and digital marketing expertise is growing. StudioHawk is well-positioned to expand either geographically or through specialised services such as SEO for ecommerce, mobile platforms, and voice search optimisation.

2. Mentorship and Advocacy

Sanders has a unique voice as a young entrepreneur who has overcome adversity. This positions him as an effective mentor and advocate for youth entrepreneurship, digital skills education, and social inclusion. His story can inspire others and build influence beyond commercial metrics.

3. Social Impact Initiatives

Sanders can leverage StudioHawk's success to support community-focused projects, particularly those aligned with digital literacy and opportunity access for marginalised groups. This would transform commercial success into broader social advancement.

Conclusion

Harry Sanders exemplifies a new generation of Australian entrepreneurs who blend commercial excellence with personal purpose. His journey from a self-taught SEO expert to the founder of a major digital agency illustrates the possibilities of youth-driven innovation.

The challenges he faces—competitive markets, leadership at scale, and evolving social expectations—are significant but accompanied by opportunities to expand both the impact and reach of his venture. Sanders's story is both a testimony to entrepreneurial resilience and a template for how young founders can shape future business landscapes.

Find out more: StudioHawk

TEN TIPS FOR TEENS

Here are ten practical tips for teenagers seeking to develop their entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

1. Learn How Money Really Works

Understanding income, expenses, saving, debt, and profit is foundational to entrepreneurship. Teens should practise budgeting, track spending, and explore how businesses earn and manage money. Financial literacy enables better decision-making and reduces risk when turning ideas into viable ventures.

2. Start Small and Take Action

Entrepreneurial skills develop through experience, not theory alone. Begin with small projects such as selling products online, offering local services, or running school-based initiatives. These low-risk opportunities build confidence, problem-solving skills, and practical understanding of customers and operations.

3. Develop Problem-Solving Skills

Successful entrepreneurs identify problems worth solving. Teens should observe everyday frustrations at school, home, or in their community and consider practical solutions. This mindset shifts focus from “making money” to creating value, which is the foundation of sustainable entrepreneurship.

4. Learn From Failure Early

Mistakes are an essential part of entrepreneurship. Teens should view setbacks as feedback rather than failure. Reflecting on what worked, what didn't, and why builds resilience, adaptability, and improved judgment—skills that are critical in both business and life.

5. Build Communication Skills

Entrepreneurs must clearly explain ideas, negotiate, and persuade others. Teens should practise speaking, writing, and presenting confidently. Pitching ideas, participating in debates, or working in teams helps develop the communication skills required to attract customers, partners, and supporters.

6. Understand Customers and Markets

Entrepreneurship is not about personal ideas alone—it is about meeting customer needs. Teens should learn to ask questions, listen carefully, and gather feedback. Understanding what people value, how much they are willing to pay, and why they choose certain products is essential.

7. Learn Basic Business Concepts

Teens should become familiar with core business ideas such as revenue, costs, profit, pricing, competition, and marketing. These concepts help them understand how businesses operate and why some succeed while others struggle. Even simple knowledge creates a strong foundation for future learning.



8. Use Technology and Digital Tools

Digital tools enable teens to test ideas quickly and at low cost. Learning how to use spreadsheets, design software, social media, and online platforms supports modern entrepreneurship. Technology also opens access to global markets, resources, and learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

9. Seek Mentors and Role Models

Learning from experienced entrepreneurs accelerates growth. Teens should seek guidance from teachers, family members, business owners, or online role models. Mentors provide practical advice, encouragement, and perspective, helping teens avoid common mistakes and build confidence in their ideas.

10. Act Ethically and Think Long Term

Strong entrepreneurship balances profit with responsibility. Teens should consider ethics, fairness, and long-term impact when making decisions. Trust, reputation, and integrity are valuable assets that take time to build and can be lost quickly through poor choices.

Entrepreneurship is not about personal ideas alone—it is about meeting customer needs.

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