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# Crazy Is a Compliment: The Power of Zigging When Everyone Else Zags

Linda Rottenberg

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**Linda Rottenberg : Crazy Is a Compliment: The Power of Zigging When Everyone Else Zags** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crazy Is a Compliment: The Power of Zigging When Everyone Else Zags:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. inspiring book filled with great examplesBy WalkeenThis book was written from Linda's first hand experience dealing with the ups and downs she's observed from the countless Endeavor entrepreneurs over the years as well as historical accounts of some of the worlds most successful entrepreneurs like

Henry Ford, Estée Lauder and Veve Cliquot. The lessons learned and the honest authentic voice of the author made this a truly enjoyable/easy read (finished it in 2 days). Recommended for any aspiring change makers out there as a good dose of inspiration and education on how to build and maintain a truly High-impact business. @walkeen23 of 26 people found the following review helpful. Powerful learnings from work with 1,000 entrepreneurs

By Niko Canner Crazy is a look backwards, tracing the course of Linda Rottenberg's own development and the history of Endeavor, the organization that she co-founded and leads. Endeavor selects, mentors and supports exceptional entrepreneurs in countries where the entrepreneurial ecosystems need to be built up in order to generate economic growth. It is a look backwards, as well, at the group of nearly 1,000 Endeavor entrepreneurs, representing a constellation of businesses that today generate \$6.5B in annual revenues. What makes Crazy important is not so much that it provides another set of insights for those seeking entrepreneurial success as that it paints a picture of entrepreneurial success as one expression of a broader ethos. Crazy unpacks the ways of operating that make the entrepreneurial ethos work, whether building a company from the ground up, building from within an organization, or building one's own life. Rottenberg makes the case that the largest challenges are inner challenges: both the emotional challenges of overcoming fear, shame and doubt — and the intellectual challenges of overcoming the ingrained concepts that can pull one away from the long journey of building almost anything great (e.g., "betting the farm" rather than "derisking risk"; overemphasis on having a big, breakthrough idea). Rottenberg exemplifies the lessons she shares. Rottenberg's idea and Endeavor's idea is entrepreneurship itself — and entrepreneurs flourish in ecosystems. Crazy teaches us that ecosystems can be built and that the work of building can largely be done by others if the right work gets done to inspire them, link them and can create a structure in which that work can happen. Crazy charts Rottenberg's progress from a messy beginning to what I consider to be one of the world's most elegant organizations.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. How to be a better entrepreneur!

By Marcus Norton This book aligns well with other business books I have read. If you want to know how to be a better entrepreneur this book appears to me to be one of the best. The Author's business is that of helping entrepreneurs around the world. She quotes research from outside resources. Seeing as she has literally worked with other entrepreneurs and is just sharing stories of problems she has had. How is that tooting her own horn? Interesting how some people claim she is "tooting her horn" and then don't give examples to where she tooted her horn.

"If people aren't calling you crazy, you aren't thinking big enough." These days taking chances isn't just for college dropouts in hoodies. Whether you work at a Fortune 500 company, a nonprofit, or a mom-and-pop, everybody needs to think and act like an entrepreneur. We all need to be nimble, adaptive, daring — and maybe even a little crazy — or risk being left behind. But how do you take smart risks without risking it all? That's where Linda Rottenberg's expertise comes in. As the co-founder and CEO of Endeavor, the world's leading organization dedicated to supporting fast-growing entrepreneurs, she's spent the last two decades helping innovators think bold and execute smart. Now Rottenberg draws on her unrivaled experience to show you the proven techniques to achieve your dreams: from overcoming fear to facing down critics, from stalking supporters to exploiting chaos. Crazy Is a Compliment combines inspiring stories, original research, and practical advice to create a road map for getting started and going bigger. Rottenberg brings to life iconic entrepreneurs like Walt Disney and Estée Lauder and reveals how companies like MTV, GE, and Burberry found their best successes by breaking the corporate mold and embracing the entrepreneur mind-set. She also introduces us to some of the one thousand entrepreneurs she's advised, like Leila Velez, who started a hair-care company in her kitchen sink in Rio that now earns \$80 million a year. As Linda writes: "Every day I meet people with a dream. Maybe yours is serving coffee and fantasizing about launching a microbrewery; maybe yours is skipping college and yearning to start your own design firm; maybe yours is sitting in your cubicle and brainstorming a new idea that can improve your company. You have a dream, but you don't know how to turn your dream into reality. Or you've already launched your dream but you're unsure how to take it to the next level. This book can show you the way."

"Call me crazy, but I think Linda is onto something big here. She delivers powerful insights with her legendary wit and candor to show how everyone can think and act like an entrepreneur." — Michael Dell, founder and CEO, Dell Inc. "For nearly two decades, Linda has been teaching and learning from the boldest entrepreneurs around the world. In this terrific book, she shares what it takes to master the chaos of starting your own business — or simply to grow your own career in today's fast-changing world of work." — Reid Hoffman, co-founder/chairman of LinkedIn and co-author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller *The Start-Up of You* "Crazy is what they call people who don't fit in. And we need a lot more crazy like Linda is crazy. She is generous, curious, connected and driven to make a difference in the world. And this book captures all of that and more. Buy it, read it, live it." — Seth Godin, author of *Linchpin* "Crazy Is a Compliment is a treasure trove.. Linda Rottenberg is an extraordinary entrepreneur who has guided many of the world's greatest entrepreneurs, and she offers invaluable insights — not only for start-ups, but also for companies, nonprofits, governments, and schools. If you have an idea or want to innovate, I highly recommend devouring this book." — Adam Grant, professor at the Wharton School of the University

of Pennsylvania and author of *Give and Take*; Linda has tapped into something important—that we all need to be more entrepreneurial these days. With her impressive track record and inspiring story, she shows us all how to overcome our fears and take smart, achievable steps to improve our organizations.—Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook and founder of *LeanIn.Org* "Rottenberg's energy is contagious, and the chatty, conversational presentation is designed to get readers moving. This is a great guide for those with more dreams than courage."—*Publisher's Weekly* About the Author Linda Rottenberg, the cofounder and CEO of Endeavor, has been named one of *America's* Top Leaders by U.S. News, one of 100 Innovators for the 21st Century by Time magazine, and the world's first mentor capitalist by Tom Friedman. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband, author Bruce Feiler, and their twin daughters. [www.lindarottenberg.com](http://www.lindarottenberg.com) Excerpt. Copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

### INTRODUCTION Why Everybody Needs to Act Like an Entrepreneur

I want to tell you about Leila. Leila Velez grew up in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. Her mother was a maid; her father, a janitor. In the early 1990s Leila was serving hamburgers at McDonald's. But she had a dream. Leila was frustrated by how few hair products there were for the curly locks of Afro-Brazilian women like her. "Poor people deserve to feel beautiful, too," she told her sister-in-law Zica, a hairdresser. In 1993 the two amateurs turned Leila's basement into a mad scientist's lab. They tested their first product on their husbands . . . and the men's hair promptly fell out. Going back to the sink, Leila and Zica perfected their formula and opened a salon. It was an unimpressive place, down a dark corridor, a mere three hundred square feet. "How can you be successful in such a pitiful space?" their friends said. But the sisters pushed on. Soon women in Rio were waiting four to six hours for an appointment, and customers were crediting their products with not only improving their hair texture but also boosting their self-esteem. When I tell this story to friends, they often say, "That must be one of those charming stories we keep hearing about women in microfinance." But there's nothing micro about Leila's story. Within a few years her company, Beleza Natural, was selling an array of hair products in a handful of hair clinics. By 2013 Beleza Natural was serving 100,000 customers a month, employing 2,300 people, and earning \$80 million a year. So how did Leila do it? How did she go from being an hourly worker at McDonald's to the leader of a multimillion-dollar franchise? And more to the point: What can the rest of us learn from her story to be more daring in our own lives? We can learn a lot. First, we can be reminded of the value of looking at the world through fresh eyes. The legendary retailer Sam Walton once said, "If everybody else is doing it one way, there's a good chance you can find your niche by going in exactly the opposite direction." Leila saw that everybody else was just selling hair products; she would sell confidence. She called her niche lipstick psychology. Many of the best ideas fulfill a need no one else knows exists. Earle Dickson was a twenty-eight-year-old cotton buyer for Johnson Johnson in 1920, whose wife, Josephine, kept cutting herself while cooking. To stanch the bleeding, Josephine used the standard remedy, a piece of rag attached with string. The contraptions quickly fell off. Her husband began tinkering and soon presented his wife, then his bosses with an alternative: a self-adhesive bandage with the cotton built in. Band-Aids, as they were called, failed to take off until the company gave away free samples to butchers and Boy Scouts. More than a hundred billion of Earle's inventions have since been sold. Next, we can learn that psychology plays an enormous role in tackling risk. The biggest barriers to success are not structural or cultural; they are mental and emotional. At every turn, someone (or, more likely, everyone) will call you and your idea crazy. The job of the innovator is to push past naysayers and find a way to drive forward. Leila was soft-spoken and shy. She wasn't used to bold action, confrontation, or speaking out. Before she could foster confidence in others, she first had to discover it in herself. Finally, we can learn that risk takers rarely go it alone. Those seeking to disrupt the status quo need support. And support doesn't just mean financial, though that always helps. More often it means advice on handling fear, navigating tricky growth decisions, and breaking an intimidating task into manageable chunks. When Steve Jobs was just starting out, he sought the counsel of Robert Noyce, the coinventor of the microchip and the unofficial mayor of Silicon Valley. As with everything he did, Jobs took this relationship to an extreme. He would drop by Noyce's house uninvited on his motorcycle or telephone around midnight. An exasperated Noyce finally told his wife, "If he calls one more time I'm just not going to pick up the phone!" But of course Noyce always picked up. Entrepreneurs always find a way. So where did Leila go to get the backing she needed? That's where my story intersects with hers. In 1997 I cofounded an organization called Endeavor to support dreamers like Leila. In nearly two decades, Endeavor has screened forty thousand candidates and selected roughly one thousand individuals from more than six hundred fast-growing companies to be part of our network. We discovered these innovators in the least likely places: cyber cafes in South Africa, sandwich shops in Mexico, women-only gyms in Turkey; gamer hangouts in Indonesia; ceviche stores in the United States. We've worked with founders in such crazily diverse fields as biometric eye scanning, snail farming, pharmacy franchising, and wind turbine manufacturing. We've helped daring individuals operate in such challenging environments as Athens in the midst of a currency crisis, Cairo in the throes of a revolution, and Miami as it emerged out of recession. We call these business leaders high-impact entrepreneurs, a term Endeavor coined in 2004. High-impact means individuals with the biggest ideas, the likeliest potential to build businesses that matter, and the greatest ability to inspire others. Once we invite these leaders into our network we do whatever we can to help them succeed, from forming advisory

boards to accessing capital, from hiring talent to honing leadership. And we encourage them to nurture and mentor the next generation. Today Endeavor has offices in forty-five cities around the world, employs 350 people, and has a pool of 5,000 volunteer mentors. While some of our ventures lose steam, the vast majority have grown at an impressive rate. In 2013 the entrepreneurs we support generated close to \$7 billion in revenues and provided more than 400,000 jobs. My experience has taught me that the capacity to dream big is not confined to any country, age, or gender. The desire to take initiative, be your own boss, advance your life, and improve the world is universal. But the roadblocks are universal, too. I've spent the last two decades working to identify the common mistakes and specific stumbling blocks that innovators face as they attempt to turn their ideas into reality. I've sought to isolate the mix of concrete steps, strategic support, and emotional encouragement they need to bring their ideas to the next level. And I've learned when change makers need a shoulder to cry on and when they need a kick in the pants. When I met Leila, for example, she was eager to expand yet scrambling to keep pace with demand. She was overwhelmed. To help, we introduced her to mentors who could support her growth. We encouraged her to create a shareholder agreement with her in-laws. When she got divorced, Leila even found a new husband through our network. (She got what I call the full-service treatment!) But most important, we showed her that instead of being alone, she's part of the biggest movement in the world today, the unstoppable, unwavering trend toward individuals who seek to improve their own lives and, in the process, improve the world around them. She's an entrepreneur. —ENTREPRENEURSHIP ISN'T JUST FOR ENTREPRENEURS ANYMORE — I wrote this book because I believe that we all have a little Leila within us. Every day I meet people with a dream. Those people are just like Leila — and just like you. Maybe you're serving coffee and fantasizing about launching a microbrewery; maybe you've skipped college and yearn to start your own design firm; maybe you're sitting in your cubicle and brainstorming a new idea that can improve your company; maybe you've got a plan to improve the environment; maybe you're a stay-at-home parent with an idea for a new mobile app; or maybe you're a retiree hoping to start a BB. You have a dream, but you don't know how to turn your dream into reality. Or you've already launched your dream, but you're unsure how to take it to the next level. This book can show you the way. I'm going to impart lessons I've learned from helping Leila and a thousand others like her. I'll disclose the results of intensive research conducted over several years by the Endeavor team and our partners at Bain Company. I'll lay out the insights I've been taking to Fortune 500 companies the last few years because they, too, want to become more entrepreneurial. And I'll share my own up-and-down story of building (and occasionally rebuilding) a fast-growing organization that's a hybrid of nonprofit and for-profit. Above all, I'm going to try to show you that no matter what you're doing right now, no matter what dream you're trying to get going or grow bigger, you need these lessons. You need to think and act more like an entrepreneur. When we started Endeavor in the late 1990s, the word "entrepreneur" was not very popular. It wasn't even used by most people who started companies. Adapted from the French word meaning "to undertake," entrepreneurship existed as an academic concept, but the expression — or any expression like it, for that matter — was barely used in most countries. Even most Americans viewed entrepreneurship as a rarefied notion that applied only to founders of the fastest-growing (or fastest-failing) enterprises. And at the risk of my pointing out the obvious, those leaders were mostly young, mostly in tech, and mostly male. That stereotype no longer holds. Today entrepreneurship doesn't just mean starting a tech company. It means undertaking any bold venture — from improving your neighborhood to selling crafts out of your basement; from modernizing your family business to proposing a new initiative in your corporation. The techniques involved in sharpening your idea, facing down critics, recruiting boosters, and handling setbacks apply in almost every realm of work. Entrepreneurship, defined as a nimble, creatively destructive, optimistic force, has become the go-to problem-solving technique of the twenty-first century. If some moments have been ripe for diplomats, financiers, soldiers, or politicians, today is ripe for entrepreneurs. Now, that may sound a little grand. But scroll through the Internet, flip through a corporate annual report, visit a college campus, listen to moms and dads at school drop-off: Everyone is talking about being a force of disruption, trying a fresh approach, becoming an agent of change. Alexis Ohanian, the founder of Reddit, put it well: "I have a startup" is the new "I'm in a band." Even the Boy Scouts now have an entrepreneurship merit badge and Mattel has Entrepreneur Barbie! The reasons behind this shift are complex, but they come down to a simple reality: We live in a time of uncertainty. Our economies, our companies, our jobs are no longer stable and secure. Change is the only constant. To survive, we all need the skills required to continually reinvent ourselves. Everyone needs to take some risk or risk being left behind. Here's the good news: Anybody can be a change agent today. There are no admission criteria. There is no wardrobe requirement. There is no secret vote. Entrepreneurship is for everyone. But here's the bad news: We don't really have a language to discuss this wide swath of workers who are becoming more entrepreneurial. The word "entrepreneur," once underused, is now in jeopardy of being overused. As a result, lots of people (me included) began taking this clunky word and adding all sorts of qualifiers to it, making it even clunkier. Suddenly we had "social entrepreneur" to describe those building mission-driven organizations that focus on everything from human rights to the environment; "microentrepreneur" to describe individuals starting lifestyle businesses;

“intrapreneur” to label change makers within large corporations; “copreneur” to describe couples starting businesses; even “mompreneurs,” “dadpreneurs,” and “kidpreneurs.” These terms became so unwieldy that on Twitter everyone just gave up and shortened “entrepreneurs” to #treps. Trust me, as someone who’s sat on a gazillion panels about the “future of entrepreneurship,” I know we need a new lexicon. In this book I want to try a different approach, one that I hope is clearer and certainly more fun. I’ve given each of these different groups a name. The names are simple, easy to understand, and reflective of the arenas in which people operate. They represent four different species, and they all need help in realizing their dreams. One of these species surely applies to you. **GAZELLES.** This is the classic entrepreneur of myth and reality, someone who starts a new business venture and aims for it to explode into a white-hot phenomenon—Home Depot, Facebook, Jenny Craig, Under Armour, Instagram. High growth is the goal. The Endeavor entrepreneurs I work with fall into this category—or they aspire to, at least. The term “gazeller” was coined by the economist David Birch in 1994. It describes high-growth businesses whose sales double every four years. Though only 2 to 4 percent of companies fit this model in the United States, this otherwise minuscule group accounts for nearly all private-sector job creation. When you hear politicians say, “Small businesses create most of the new jobs,” they’re really talking about the young and growing firms. They’re talking about gazelles. Birch chose gazelles because they’re fast moving and high jumping. You would think gazelles already know how to be successful entrepreneurs, but in my experience, they don’t. Sure, they know how to start something, but unfortunately they keep making the same mistakes over and over again: They expand too quickly; they lose focus; they tangle with their partners; they can’t give up control. (And yup, I’ve made all those mistakes, too, which I’ll discuss in detail.) After seeing these pitfalls repeatedly, I developed a list of the most common mistakes made by gazelles and a playbook for how to avoid them if you want your start-up to become a big enterprise. **SKUNKS.** The term “intrapreneur,” which first popped up in the 1970s and first appeared in the American Heritage Dictionary in 1992, is defined as a person within a large corporation who takes responsibility for “turning an idea into a profitable finished product through assertive risk-taking and innovation.” While the word is no more pleasing today, the idea is a lot more popular: Encouraging people to be more independent and creative inside corporations has become an urgent cry. In 2013 I was invited to speak at Dell World on a panel about disruption. The founder, Michael Dell, had just taken the company private after a long battle with shareholders. He declared his intention to restore the firm’s entrepreneurial DNA, returning it to its roots in Room 2713 of the Dobie Center at the University of Texas. Michael opened the conference of six thousand people by saying, “Welcome to the world’s largest start-up!” But while encouraging employees to take more risks is simple, getting them to follow through is hard. “Some are afraid of change,” Michael told me later. “This resistance is almost certainly a path of disaster in any fast-changing business.” There are the quick, he said, or the dead. Michael isn’t the only corporate leader seeking to reclaim his company’s entrepreneurial mojo. Most of the world’s top CEOs realize they have to disrupt their own organizations before others beat them to it. Yet somehow this message is not getting through to many of their employees. If you work in a large corporation today, with a benefits package and retirement plan, you may think you’re safe. You may think all this entrepreneurial undertaking is not for you. But you’d be wrong. While starting something new involves peril, not starting something new today is just as perilous, if not more so. Pretending your job is safe and your company is stable leaves you dangerously exposed. If you think risk taking is risky, being risk averse is often riskier. First of all, your company itself isn’t safe. The topple rate of big companies, a metric that gauges how often they lose their leadership positions, more than doubled between 1965 and 2008. A new member of the SP index in the 1920s could expect to remain on the list for sixty-five years. By 2012 that average had dropped to eighteen years. In the last five years alone, SP 500 mainstays like Heinz, Sprint, Sara Lee, RadioShack, Kodak, Office Depot, and the New York Times Company all fell from the list. Even if your company continues to thrive, your ability to survive in it depends on your capacity and willingness to innovate. Job security these days depends on the same qualities that make good entrepreneurs: agility, imagination, persistence, execution. To put it another way, adapt from within or you may be forced to adapt from without. Become a skunk. I’ve adopted this term from the Lockheed Corporation, which during World War II set up a secret division to build fighter jets. It was called Skunk Works. Though rumor suggested the name came from the poor hygiene habits of the overworked employees, it actually came from the moonshine factory in the cartoon series “I Abner.” (The moonshine was said to be created by grinding up dead skunks.) Either way, the message is clear: Entrepreneurs operating within large corporations go out of their way to stink up the joint. **DOLPHINS.** For the last decade or so, there’s been abundant lip service paid to the idea that the social sector must become more entrepreneurial. Nonprofits need to employ more business techniques. Philanthropy needs to be more innovative and metrics driven. I’ve been involved in this movement for twenty-five years and been lucky to have had the chance to work with two of its pioneers. In 1989 I volunteered to help Wendy Kopp recruit college seniors to join her start-up, Teach For America. When she proposed creating a national teacher corps in her senior thesis at Princeton, her adviser responded, “My Dear Ms. Kopp, you are quite evidently deranged.” But Wendy would not be deterred. Teach For America now receives more than fifty thousand

applications each year and has an annual budget of \$350 million. I later went to work for Bill Drayton, the “godfather of social entrepreneurship”; Bill was among the first to fund social entrepreneurs through his organization, Ashoka. Having supported more than three thousand nonprofit innovators across the globe, Bill champions the idea that anyone, anywhere can be a change maker. “Everyone gets to be a player,” he said. Despite these trendsetters, too many nonprofits, community groups, and social service organizations continue to lag behind the age of disruption. They lack leaders willing to deploy the full range of entrepreneurial skills needed to scale their ideas and maximize their impact. What they need are more dolphins. Dolphins are my nickname for contrarians in the nonprofit or public sector who are willing to buck the conventions of their professions and agitate for real change. Why dolphins? Because they’re smart and social (they live in cooperative groups, called pods) and are one of the few animals shown to be altruistic toward others. But they’re not pushovers: Harm a dolphin’s pod, and watch out! Today even causes for which there are no compelling private-sector solutions are ripe for entrepreneurial shake-up. It’s dolphins making the waves. BUTTERFLIES. They’re a final collection of entrepreneurs who need these lessons, and they may be the fastest-growing group of all. These are small-scale or lifestyle entrepreneurs. First among these are sole proprietors—plumbers, yoga instructors, freelance writers, organic farmers, artists. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that a majority of U.S. businesses have no paid employees. Forty percent of American adults have now spent part of their careers working on their own, and 24 million more are expected to be self-employed by 2018. Globally the number of independent contractors will reach 1.3 billion by 2020. These fields are booming because they’re open to anyone: moms, dads, grannies, twenty-somethings, even teens starting microventures in their basements, cars, or bathrooms. (Yes, bathtub brews are back!) As Jay-Z put it, “I’m not a businessman; I’m a business, man.” The second part of this group has just a handful of employees. There are seven million companies in America that employ workers; 90 percent of them have fewer than twenty. While some of these entrepreneurs aim to be fast-growing gazelles, most are content to stay small and local. I’m dubbing this species butterflies because butterflies are varied (there are at least 17,500 different types of butterfly) and driven by freedom and individualism. In both Eastern and Western cultures, butterflies have long symbolized the soul, especially one reborn after a period of cocooning. Beyond personal transformation, butterflies are vital to their habitat and an indicator of its overall well-being. More butterflies equal a healthier ecosystem. At first glance, this group would hardly seem a candidate for the skill set of groundbreaking entrepreneurs. Do you really need to be disruptive when you’re selling homemade cheese at the farmer’s market? The answer: You do, especially because your competitor probably has an in at Whole Foods, now accepts credit card payments with a Square reader, and has just launched a vibrant Web business. Etsy, the online arts, crafts, and food hub, now has more than a million “makers” selling goods directly to consumers. Even butterflies need to spread their wings. Besides, butterflies are uniquely suited to this age of disruption. In chaos theory, “butterfly effect” is the term given to the idea that change can come from anywhere. The weather in Central Park can be affected by a butterfly’s flapping its wings in South America. I saw the sensitivity and fearlessness of butterflies firsthand on the eve of Superstorm Sandy, near my home in Brooklyn. I had stopped in to buy bread from my favorite local bakery, Bien Cuit. It was not long after the mayor announced evacuations. “I guess you’ll be closing soon,” I said to the man behind the counter. “No way,” he replied. “The neighborhood needs us. We’re going to stay open all night.” Don’t underestimate the tenacity of a butterfly. Today, nearly two decades after I first started hunting down entrepreneurs, innovators of all types are popping up everywhere. They aren’t waiting for changes to happen to them; they’re making changes happen every day. Whatever your passion, pick one of these species and start writing your story—or risk being an ostrich, with your head stuck in the sand. —THE SECRET SAUCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP — But once you’ve embraced the life of a change maker, how do you know what to do next? Again, that’s where I come into the picture. I’d like to invite you into my bedroom for a second. You’ll find several things of interest there. An African bedspread I brought back from my travels. A poem my husband wrote for me when he proposed. And on the nightstand next to my side of the bed, a stack of half-read books. They’re all about entrepreneurship. I love entrepreneurship. I don’t love its literature. When I sat down to work on this book, I made a list of everything I didn’t want it to be. It wouldn’t be a how-to manual for writing a business plan, developing a marketing strategy, or reading a venture capital (VC) term sheet. It wouldn’t be an academic primer on the history of entrepreneurship. It wouldn’t be an inspirational graduation speech filled with feel-good bromides. And it wouldn’t be the story of one person’s journey to success. If that’s what you’re looking for, go read Howard Schultz’s *Pour Your Heart Into It*, Richard Branson’s *Losing My Virginity*, Tony Hsieh’s *Delivering Happiness*, or Walter Isaacson’s *Steve Jobs*, all books I read and enjoyed. Here’s what this book is: It’s the story of the entrepreneurial journeys of many people—gazelles, skunks, dolphins, and butterflies—and what the rest of us can learn from them. It’s my attempt to break down a process that often seems overwhelming into a series of achievable steps. It’s my shot at answering this question: Since everybody has to take risks these days, how do you make sure you’re taking smart risks? To answer that, I’ve divided the book into three sections: “Get Going,” “Go Big,” and “Go Home.” In “Get Going,” I lay out

the road map for becoming an entrepreneur: from battling inner fear to fending off skeptics, to stalking supporters, to exploiting chaos. The theme in this section is attitude: how to get yourself the right one and brush off the wrong one. In "Go Big," I talk about how to take your idea to scale. To do that, I help you figure out your entrepreneur personality, avoid rookie mistakes, find the right mentors, and learn how to lead. "Leadership 3.0" is my term for the new skills required to attract and retain today's hyperconnected, hyperskilled, hypersensitive talent. Finally, in "Go Home," I discuss what it means to live like an entrepreneur. This includes how to cultivate meaning in your workplace and how to integrate your work with your family. If the first two sections are the craft of entrepreneurship, I consider this the art. This part is also the most personal to me. I believe deeply that part of the mantle of entrepreneurship is to inspire and help others to follow this path. Also, as a mom who runs a large organization, I've fought hard to maintain a harmony between my professional life and my family life, and I encourage my team to do the same. Altogether, these topics capture what I've learned in two decades of experiencing the ups and downs of the entrepreneurial life. They are why I wanted to write this book. But there's one more reason that explains why I wanted to write it now—YOU DON'T NEED A HOODIE TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR—In 2012 I visited Wilkes University, a vibrant campus tucked away in an old mining town in central Pennsylvania, to give a talk about entrepreneurship. Toward the end of the QA, a hand shot up in back. "I like your stories about entrepreneurs," he said, "but I'm wondering if they apply to me. I don't have an idea that's big enough. I don't have the right connections. And I don't live in Silicon Valley." A little taken aback and somewhat distracted (I knew my seven-year-old daughters were waiting up for me at home), I said the first thing that came to mind: "Don't worry. You don't need a hoodie to be an entrepreneur. Anybody can be one." The answer worked fine enough, but all during my ride home, I was haunted by his question and increasingly disappointed by my glib response. In the early years of Endeavor, whenever I bumped into anyone who didn't quite understand what we were doing (which is to say, most people I met), I would sum it up by saying, "We're taking the magic of Silicon Valley and sprinkling it in places with talent and big ideas, but no belief in the ability of individuals to turn those ideas into reality." I used to think that applied only to people like Leila. Now everyone needs a bit of that magic. We all need a little bit of Leila in our lives. By the time I got home to Brooklyn that night, I had decided to write this book. I wanted to write it for those students in Pennsylvania. I wanted to write it for my twin daughters waiting up to say good night. I wanted to write it for all those who have a dream they don't know how to realize, who want to marry their passions with their everyday lives, who want to make an impact on their companies, their communities, or the larger world. In her classic cookbook *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* Julia Child, herself a genre-making, ceiling-breaking entrepreneur, wrote, "Anyone can cook in the French manner anywhere, with the right instruction." This book takes a similar view toward dreaming big and making change. I used to believe in the maxim that entrepreneurs are "born, not made." Now I believe that entrepreneurship, like great cooking, can be practiced and honed by anybody with a desire to learn. (Also, just like master chefs, even the most skilled entrepreneurs drop some pans and break a few eggs along the way.) In the end, mastering the art of entrepreneurship is not simply about starting a business. It's about taking chances, overcoming doubts, managing risk, dealing with chaos, cultivating employees, coping with stumbles and successes, integrating work and family, and paying it forward to ensure that the next generation can dream big as well. And it's realizing that all those people calling you crazy are giving you a huge compliment. So let's get going. PART I Get Going CHAPTER 1 Getting to Day One In the spring of 1998 I stepped into a small, unassuming office in a nondescript neighborhood of Buenos Aires. I went there to meet Wences Casares, a charismatic twentysomething with a crazy idea. When I walked out several hours later, I was carrying one of the more important lessons I ever learned about entrepreneurship: The most valuable backer you need to start any venture is not your mother, father, spouse, boss, banker, or friend. It's not anyone else at all. It's you. And yours is the hardest backer you'll ever have to win. Before we talk about what it takes to get an initiative under way, we have to talk about what it means to get yourself in the proper frame of mind. You can't convince others until you first convince yourself. Few people I know have done this under more extreme circumstances than Wences. Wences was born on a sheep farm in Patagonia—twenty miles from the nearest neighbor and one hundred miles from the closest town. His father was a rancher, but also a ham radio operator and DIYer. He gave each of his four children a computer in the bedroom and jerry-rigged a local network so they could communicate with one another. "The biggest impact my father had on me was showing me how to be a doer," Wences said. "Living in the middle of nowhere, we constantly had to come up with creative ways of solving problems, like digging trenches or building bridges on the side of a mountain." Being an entrepreneur is just a fancy way of saying you're a doer, he told me. And did he ever do! In high school Wences started a T-shirt painting shop. He also downloaded a mismatched database of all the telephone numbers in Patagonia, corrected the mistakes, published a series of directories, and sold advertising. He earned \$80,000. The first person in his family to attend college, Wences started yet another business while attending classes. It was the inaugural Internet service provider in Argentina. A year later he sold the firm in a deal he thought kept him as part of the team. After signing the contract, Wences showed up at his office and was locked out. He got virtually nothing. In these early ventures, Wences was unbowed by fear, and no wonder, he had

little at stake. But now the stakes were getting higher. While still enrolled at university, he set out to create a financial services portal for Latin America, a local E\*Trade. But his studies were getting in the way, so he traveled one thousand miles back to Patagonia to inform his father he was dropping out of college. In what he described as the scariest moment of his life, Wences also told his dad he'd asked his two sisters to drop out of school, too, and join him. His father considered the information for a few minutes, then said, "Do it right." His unspoken message: "Don't shame the family." At this point things started to really get scary, and Wences, for the first time, began to question himself. He lived in a community where going it alone was not valued, family reputation was everything, and the ability of him or his sisters to build a career or find a spouse was now on the line. And worse, nobody liked his idea. Thirty-three investors turned him down. "We barely have a functioning stock market," he was told. "How can we possibly support an electronic trading platform?" I listened to this story while sitting in Wences's grungy office in Buenos Aires, surrounded by a few broken-down computers and peeling wallpaper. "I want to keep going," he said. "But sometimes I look at my sisters sleeping in our tiny apartment, and I think, 'Am I crazy?'" He turned to me. "Do you think I'm crazy?" "Yes," I said. "But that's why yours are going to succeed. Plus, I think I can help." Wences's story shows that the first step to becoming an entrepreneur does not happen in a laboratory, a conference room, or even a pitch session. It happens in the mind. And not the part of the mind where the lightbulbs go off and the ahas are heard. It happens in the part where the darkness resides and the doubts cry out. It happens in that place where you start to get worried about your rent, your mortgage, your children, your debt building up on your credit card, your reputation in the cafeteria, your sisters sleeping on the couch. It happens when yours are exposed. Jeff Bezos has a wonderful way of describing this heightened mind-set of being an entrepreneur. He calls the mix of anticipation, excitement, and uncertainty Day One. In Bezos's coinage, "Day One" is not a date on a calendar; it's a commitment to seeing every day as a fresh opportunity to create something new. Sixteen years after started, Bezos concluded a shareholder letter by saying his approach remains unchanged: "It's still Day One." At Endeavor we adopted Bezos's concept and turned it into a rallying cry to help entrepreneurs acknowledge and overcome their moments of insecurity and fear. We even started a series of talks in which change makers described their Day One experiences. We tell speakers, "Don't focus on the idea; focus on the emotions, the challenges." When I gave one of these talks, my team rejected multiple drafts and pushed me to be more revealing. In the next few chapters I'll talk about this process of overcoming emotional hurdles and getting an idea out of the shower, off the napkin, and into the world. While it may appear intimidating and others will surely call you nuts, there are actually a host of concrete ways to reduce your hazard and maximize your chances of success. But first, I'm going to focus on what it means to give yourself permission to undertake such a challenge to begin with. To me this is the breakthrough step to thinking and acting like an entrepreneur. I'll even put it in a formula:  $\text{heart} + \text{mind} - \text{fear} = \text{entrepreneur}$  Or to put it another way, entrepreneurship begins with psyching yourself up instead of psyching yourself out. — THE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOUR EARS — In the early 2000s green products were gaining popularity in the United States, but one industry was stubbornly resistant: home cleaning products. Eco-friendly offerings brought in only 1 percent of the industry's \$12 billion in sales. Clorox, the market leader, was particularly slow to adapt. It took two corporate skunks to crack the formula, but first they had to crack an even trickier code: how to be entrepreneurial in a conservative company while also finding time to be moms. Mary Jo Cook was in a bind. She was a new mother eager to spend time with her young daughter, but she was also an ambitious executive at Clorox. So she did something virtually unheard of at the century-old company: She made her job part-time. "People were pretty shocked," she told me. "There was only one professional working less than full-time." Initially Mary Jo went to four days, then to three and a half when her second child was born. Part of negotiating her own schedule meant designing a new role. "There weren't typical jobs you could just drop into," she said. The job she eventually created was heading a new division focused on innovation. When the job became too big, a colleague and fellow parent, Suzanne Sengelmann, proposed that the two share the role — another breakthrough. Their arrangement perfectly embodies the flexibility required of these entrepreneurial times. Beyond dividing responsibilities, Mary Jo and Suzanne merged themselves into one entity. Each worked three days a week, overlapping on Wednesdays. They shared a title (vice president), a voice mail, and an e-mail account. They even went by a joint name, Sam, a combination of Suzanne and MJ. Initially, Suzanne and Mary Jo were apprehensive. "Our biggest fear was failing at the job," Suzanne told me. "Because we were so high profile in the company, we were fearful that if we blew it, we would rob other women of the opportunity — both at Clorox and perhaps even broader." To their relief, not only did the new arrangement work, but it had added benefits. The act of thinking more creatively about their responsibilities encouraged them to think more creatively about their work. Also, the fact that they weren't stuck in the office all day meant they were hanging out with their customers at the playground. "Sam" kept hearing from fellow moms in the Bay Area that they were concerned about the impact of cleaning products on their children. And it wasn't just others. "You know what?" Suzanne said. "I have concerns. I clean. I grocery shop. Just having the opportunity to live the life of our core consumer was a huge advantage." "Sam" had found a new

calling: Clorox should create environmentally sensitive products targeted to moms. But MJ and Suzanne had a problem, too. They knew their plan could face resistance from colleagues. Any "nontoxic" product threatened to make Clorox's other products look "toxic." This was their true test: Would they talk themselves out of their project before it got started or risk alienating those around them by challenging the core identity of the company? Their answer: They gave themselves a quiet, under-the-radar mandate. In Mary Jo's phrase, they took "smart risks." That included giving themselves permission to spend a fifth of their time dabbling with their idea. "We told our boss it was ten percent," Suzanne told me, "but really it was closer to twenty." They called it their skunk project. "The beauty of a skunk project," Suzanne said, "is you don't have to go through the same processes and approvals and questions and all that; you can just do it." And they did. First, they went to their local supermarket and bought every green product. None impressed them. Next, they reached out to target consumers, whom they dubbed chemical-avoiding naturalists. Then they discovered another underground group at Clorox—this one comprised of chemists. (It, too, was headed by a working mom.) This group was also tinkering with biodegradable formulas and had adopted the nickname Project Kermit to celebrate its interest in all things green. The two teams merged forces. They kept their bosses informed but didn't ask for explicit sign-off; they paid expenses out of existing budgets. Project Kermit's early efforts failed. "The first time there wasn't enough of a market interest," Mary Jo said. "The second time the technology wasn't good enough. The third time all the pieces came together." In late 2007 Clorox released Green Works. Through a novel endorsement deal, products were packaged with the seal of the Sierra Club. Within six months the new line had captured 40 percent of the natural market. Within five years Green Works was a \$60 million annual business. It may not be easy being green, but with a little ingenuity, two skunks named "Sam" found a way to make it profitable. What's striking about this story is the willingness of two part-time executives to resist their own temptation to hold themselves back as they pursued an unconventional project. Time after time I've seen people considering doing something bold get stuck at this stage. They keep waiting for someone else to give them permission, but here's what I've learned: That someone doesn't exist. The only person who can give you permission to take risk is you. When I asked Suzanne how people inside more traditional corporations can give themselves that green light, she said, "I believe that in every company, no matter how traditional, there are entrepreneurial idea people. But ideas are fragile. Ideas require conviction. They require knowing something is right in your gut because there's no physics or data that supports the idea."