

Title: **What is entrepreneurship and why is it important?**
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What is entrepreneurship and why is it important?

By Craig Felzien

Entrepreneurship is an essential element of American free enterprise.

I believe entrepreneurship is woven into the very fabric of our lives as Americans. Threaded into our economics, our sense of liberty and ethics, and in our general inclination for optimism and hopefulness.

In my opinion, entrepreneurship is the spirit of enterprise, a pioneering spirit, which is the main ingredient for success. Success for the individual, a state and a nation. It is the idea of getting more of what you want or need. Entrepreneurship is important because it is a human condition. Perhaps, depending upon your belief system, bestowed upon us by a creator. If true, the spirit of enterprise, entrepreneurship, creativity and the pioneering spirit are "baked-in" if you will. It is our nature.

America is rooted in the notion of liberty, justice, and the pursuit of happiness.

Happiness is measured in as many ways as there are people. I speak of happiness as a broad freedom to pursue ideas and dreams. The freedom to fully engage our pioneering spirit.

Many of us are driven by a desire for a freedom from want. Many want to go where others have not gone. Some want to tweak something to make it better. Others, driven by perfectionism, want things or processes which are, well, perfect.

Business schools across the world, now offering degrees in entrepreneurship, are attracting increasing numbers of students. High schools are offering experiential experiences in career fields ripe for high-paying jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. Why? Demand.

Our youth are demanding skills necessary for the incredible pivots they will need during their working lives. Career pivots older generations rarely had to consider. Many want the ability to develop "side-hustles" as the promises of pensions and lifetime healthcare evaporate.

America's children, Missouri's children, our children, are saying, "Teach me, experientially, how to navigate and succeed in this fast-changing world. Teach me how to start and run my own business. Give me the opportunity to explore and be creative."

After just a short time in my new position, and after hundreds of conversations with foundations, economic developers, workforce development directors, entrepreneurs of all varieties, educators, and many others, my big "AH-HA" has come from high school and college students.

They have taught me there is a renaissance occurring in their hearts and minds. I feel it when I speak with them. I see it when I work with them. They are embracing a pioneering spirit, which is new and fresh. They know they are and have to be entrepreneurial. They have taught me what entrepreneurship is and why it is important. They have taught me it is about more fully returning toward optimism and a "can do attitude." I have learned the entrepreneurial spirit, so essential to American free enterprise, is very much alive in our youth, and I am convinced our future is promising and in good hands.

I see many opportunities to enhance the growth of the entrepreneurial spirit in Missouri. Opportunities which will grow our economy. There are many promising things happening at the high school and college level, with policy-makers, governmental officials, programs like DECA, CAPS, and FBLA, with well-intentioned foundations, researchers, economists, lawmakers, your local chambers of commerce and on a statewide scale with the Missouri Chamber of Commerce. We have a collective "Call to Action" to meet the demands and needs of our youth. Our future depends upon it. Stay optimistic!

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COMMENTARY