LEADERSHIP SKILLS

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# 5 Skills Entrepreneurs Can Learn from Other Professionals

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Entrepreneurs need multiple skills to stay ahead of the competition and succeed in their chosen industry. While there are plenty of books out there that highlight the skills needed to run a business -- and how to acquire them --- the best source for learning is other professionals who can demonstrate in real time how they excel in their fields.

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Here are five skills specific professionals can teach.

### 1. Taking risks -- from surgeons

Not many understand think about the risky business medicine can be. A patient's health, and in some cases even his or her life, is on the line. Surgeons have to perform procedures that involve risks, without letting those risks affect their performance.

Since being an entrepreneur is all about taking risks, risk is one skill to be learned from surgeons. Doctors are usually trained to take risks and speak to their patients about sensitive topics with confidence. Experts say the key lies in not having an emotional connect with the patient.

As mean as that may sound, entrepreneurs have to be ruthless. They're out there to win, by hook or by crook. A good example is Donald Trump. While many criticize him for being harsh, he is clearly a risk-taker and seems to have learned the art.

**Some related tips include:**

- Take risks, but calculated ones. There is no point in putting everything on the line without doing proper calculations.
- Talk to someone about what you're going to do and listen to that person's opinion.
- Don't be scared of what you're taking on.

### 2. Persistence -- from athletes

A business is all about winning and losing. While nobody likes the latter, there's no real way to avoid losses. Even biggies like Mark Zuckerberg, Vince McMahon and Lance Armstrong have tasted failure.

On his earlier challenges, Armstrong wrote, "Through my illness, I learned rejection. I was written off. That was the moment I thought, 'Okay, game on. No prisoners. Everybody's going down.'" He went on to win the Tour de France seven consecutive times. But he was later stripped of those wins and banned from most sports when he was charged with leading a doping program in cycling. He chose not to contest the charges. A CNN article commented that, "The epic downfall of cycling's star, once an idolized icon of millions around the globe, stands out in the history of professional sports."

Sometimes, not even persistence can make you a winner.

**Some related tips include:**

- See why you failed the first time and try again with more commitment.
- Work harder before you try something for a second time to be able to succeed.
- Do not let failure or criticism demotivate you.

**Related:** 10 Quotes on Persistence to Help You Keep Going

### 3. Negotiating -- from lawyers

Negotiating is a skill all entrepreneurs need. While you may have a team of experts or managers to negotiate workers' compensation benefits and other such contracts for you, you'll still need this skill to succeed and be a force to be reckoned with. Jonathan Rosenfeld, an experienced lawyer from Chicago, says, "A lot of my entrepreneur friends ask me for tips on negotiating. I'd say it is all about being confident and knowing what you're taking on. The key is in researching the topic and your opponent so you can beat them, even in their own game."

**Some related tips include:**

- Look into the other person's eyes and exude authority. Don't give signs of nervousness.
- Have a game plan and know what your aim is. Do not move away from your stance.
- Do not give up or show signs of defeat, even if it looks like you're about to lose.

### 4. Problem-solving -- from gamers

Science has shown that people who play video games tend to have good problem-solving skills. This is because most games require people to come up with unique solutions to different problems, in order to reach a higher level, or stage. At the end of the day, problem-solving is all about staying motivated and fighting to win the game. Similarly, entrepreneurs should consider their business a game, and their hurdles a stage they have to rise to.

**Some related tips include:**

- Make plans and work hard to reach your goal.
- Stay motivated and give yourself a pat on the back whenver you achieve your goals.
- Don't give up; if you find a problem, look at possible solutions and try the best ones. Then if one fails, move to the next solution.

### 5. Explaining -- from teachers

Entrepreneurs have to do a lot of explaining, at times to people with no understanding of the subject at all. But teachers, who have to deal with all kind of students, can be a help in this. Teachers develop unique ways of explaining things, sometimes using practical examples and sometimes quoting research. Their success is a result of not only exceptional skills at explaining new material, but also patience, another skill entrepreneurs need.

**Some related tips include:**

- Understand your audience well. See their mental capabilities and always plan ahead.
- Do not shy away from asking and answering questions, and always double-check that your point was properly understood.
- Use examples and simple words to explain new material, especially if your audience does not consist of professionals. Jargon or technical words can backfire.

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Most successful entrepreneurs have the tendency to learn from others' mistakes and successes. You too should make it a habit to learn from others and improve your craft.


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