



## The Founder's Dilemma

### Focus on Continuous Improvement or Celebrating Your Wins?

It all starts with a vision of what could be. You recognize a missing product or service needed in the market and know you have the solution. You are ready to pour blood, sweat, tears, and financial resources into a business that will make your vision come true. As you get closer and perhaps achieve a few milestones in your project plan, you'll start to have those around you push for public acknowledgment of your accomplishments. Instead, you stay focused on how to get everything "ready" or "perfect" for your launch and refuse any recognition.

Why does this happen? So often, as founders, we get myopic about what success looks like.

There was that time when I was asked to speak on a business podcast about my work and refused because I was afraid we weren't ready yet. Then there was that time I was invited to a heavily attended industry event where I would have been able to meet potential investors and future customers but I became paralyzed that I wouldn't answer questions correctly and would damage the image of our business before we ever got started.

Worse of all was the moment that someone who was making a significant impact on the momentum of our company chose to resign, feeling underappreciated for their efforts.



The challenge with this is the associated costs. Being insatiable might ultimately create the better mousetrap, so to speak, but what was missed during that pursuit? You could be missing out on opportunities to become known to potential investors. You may be turning over staff who are burnt out by the constant drum beat of improvement. You might even find your consuming drive towards a specific result is at the cost of time with your family, friends, or even your health.

Once again imposter syndrome is rearing its ugly head. The fear that what you've built might be flawed keeps you from sharing your results. The panic that you'll be discovered as not knowing all the answers pushes you to drive even harder. Worse, you dread the idea that those who invested in you will realize you weren't truly capable and that they made a huge mistake by betting on you. I've been there, and I get it. While I've had success in many ventures, there have also been failures along the way. Looking back, I could have had better outcomes if I had shared the small wins along the way.

Here's my challenge to you - each day, find one thing that you can be proud of in your work. This could be a successful client meeting, positive feedback from a customer, or a new feature implemented in your product. Identify who else might be part of that accomplishment. Then, celebrate the win and show your gratitude for others' contributions.

When you are asked to share your story, grab the chance and do it with pride. Whether you are just starting out or years into the work you do, you have countless lessons and bits of wisdom to share that are invaluable to others. Let strangers celebrate with you, and then ride that momentum over the speed bumps and disappointments that may creep up along the way.

***While the destination is great to arrive at ... it is the journey of getting there that truly is the fun.***

**By Nicole Spracale**

