

What Does Entrepreneurship Mean to You?

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Neostring creator Jordan Harden and Sara Blakely, founder of Spanx, at the NFTE Showcase.

Young entrepreneurs and teachers from around the world just traveled to New York City for the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship's Global Showcase. KWHS thought it would be an ideal chance to check in with some of NFTE's honored students to find out their answers to one important question: What does entrepreneurship mean to you?

Here are their thoughts:

“Entrepreneurship comes in two phases — connection and opportunities. When you are an entrepreneur, you get to connect with different people to help you and teach you, as well as give you ideas on improvement. I also believe that not all entrepreneurs will succeed their first time. Some will fail. No matter how good you are, there will be flaws. Therefore, I think the process is an opportunity for everyone to learn and grow.”

Xavier Tan, 17, Evergreen Secondary School, Woodlands, Singapore — founder of Café on Wheels, a mobile café that moves around Singapore on a double decker bus

“Entrepreneurship means creativity and the ability to use innovative ideas to make a difference in your community by addressing a need or creating a socially conscious business.”

Ambar Romero, 17, Kolbe Cathedral High School, Bridgeport, Connecticut — founder of Styles by Ambar, which recycles women's clothing for organizations that help women

“Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking. The essential parts of the entrepreneurial mindset are collaboration, risk-

taking and activation. First, you must be able to productively collaborate [tapping into the] strengths and weaknesses within a team. Entrepreneurs must be able to “think outside of the box,” which sometimes involves risks. You must be tolerant of unorthodox ideas. Lastly, there would be no such thing as entrepreneurship without activation, which is turning your thoughts and ideas into reality.”

Timothy Perez, 17, San Leandro High School, San Leandro, California — founder of TP Designs, a website design firm for educators, non-profits and businesses

“I have a learning difficulty, which means I find it hard to read and do math. I had no confidence in myself. I loved cooking, so I decided to make a cookbook using pictures and no words. By starting my own business ... I have learned so many new skills, like communication with people and marketing. Entrepreneurship means being able to take my small idea and turn my passion for baking into a business. My advice for other teenagers is go for it — nothing worthwhile comes easy.”

Clara Hewston, 15, Saint Clare’s Comprehensive, Manorhamilton, Ireland — founder of Look 2 Cook, cookbooks that help children use pictures to learn to cook

“Entrepreneurship means finding a problem you or others face everyday and thinking of ideas to solve it.”

Jordan Harden, 17, McCluer South Berkeley High School, St. Louis, Missouri — founder of Neostring, a shoestring that eliminates the need to retie your shoes

“Entrepreneurship is a way of life, a revolutionary way of enhancing your manner of critical thinking. To me, it means the future. To be an entrepreneur, you have control over your own life, as well as everything in and around you. It is the ticket to economic, financial and personal freedom. And just like Sara Blakely, the founder of Spanx, [said at the showcase]: ‘The things you pay no attention to might make you a millionaire.’”

Cyprian Ekeagwu, 20, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland — creator of Green Tech, a hovercraft toy built from recyclable materials

“I believe it is finding and taking advantage of hidden opportunities to result in positive outcomes.”

George Dowis, 17, Charleston Collegiate School, Charleston, South Carolina — creator of Wimbees, small, beaded art pieces

“Entrepreneurship is new innovative ideas that can help improve society economically and socially. It helps [people] create and develop ideas that can solve societal problems and gives them the entrepreneurial spirit to search out success.”

“It means being able to do what you love the most without the fear of failing. All you have to do is enjoy the experience that it brings and everything will be OK.”

Uriel Miramontes, 18, graduate of Santee High School, Los Angeles, California — founder of Revlo, a photography business

“Entrepreneurship equals intellectual freedom and the ability to be self-reliant. This priceless feeling of dictating the direction of your work is what keeps me going every day. I’m passionate about technology, but I’m also passionate about our brand and the ability to differentiate ourselves in the marketplace. Being an entrepreneur is not for everyone. What I would share with young high school entrepreneurs is that things may get hard along the way and doors may close in front of you. ‘ You must internalize it and you will be successful.’”

Carlos Perez, 25, graduate of Sports & Medical Sciences, Hartford, Connecticut — founder of Perez Technology Group, an IT consulting company

Conversation Starters

Now it’s your turn. What does entrepreneurship mean to you?

Not one entrepreneur interviewed for this article mentioned the word “money,” and yet it definitely plays an important role in entrepreneurship. Why do you think that is not the first thing people think of when describing the meaning of entrepreneurship? How do you connect money with entrepreneurship? Do you agree with Cyprian Ekeagwu, who says entrepreneurship is the ticket to “financial freedom?”

Pull out five concepts from the quotes above that help people define entrepreneurship. Expand on each of these a bit. What do these terms mean to you, particularly in the context of thinking and acting like an entrepreneur?

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- [Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship](#)
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- [KWHS: You Have 60 Seconds to Make Your Elevator Pitch. Go!](#)
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