



## BUSINESS WOMAN IN VACATION: AN INSPIRED JOURNEY - DOING SKI VS. DOING BUSINESS

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It's been several years for me to be chased by my beloved friend – urging me to finally go ahead and learn some ski. Why I delayed that? So many excuses...it is always time, the need of planning, the hassle in researching, but above all – fear. Fear that was controlling my thoughts, starting always with -“what if”. Several scenarios are running in my head...what if I fall, what if I'll get injured, what if I won't be good? So many “what ifs” that created this delay. This year I've finally made my decision – no more what ifs, I am going to try. After weeks of hard work, the time has come and the first ski vacation finally started. When I found myself finally skiing, I couldn't help thinking that the similarity between “doing ski” to “doing business” is simply a great one.

Keeping this in mind, I believed it can inspire others to learn and embrace this experience, perhaps it was my way to feel a little “in control” because, business I know, while about ski I know nothing.

If you ever skied I'm sure you will find my thought a bit funny but rather inspiring, if you haven't skied you might find the courage to go ahead and try it. Same goes with opening your own company and being an entrepreneur.

### Getting ready (but can you really get ready?)

Getting ready for ski is an essential step and includes lots of tasks and decisions – what equipment to buy and which one to rent, where is the best location to start with, should I take a trainer or a group, how many hours per day, how many days, prepare a medical insurance, finding a good hotel...A lot of work before the action starts and a lot of questions you don't really know about. The obvious way is to ask whoever skied to advise you, but the answers you will receive will be often confusing – rent this and don't buy that, don't you dare buying this brand, this location has only red slopes (what is that?), you better start with a trainer...so much information which is given from everybody is leading you to understanding that whatever you do the decisions will be yours and you will have to bear the results...but this sounds so familiar doesn't it? Because in most of the businesses, you face hundreds of questions and decisions before you start - what will be my model? The prices? My marketing plan? Who is exactly my target? What are my main values? How many people to hire? Where is the best location, etc., etc., but why opening a business looks to me so easy to do? Because this is the familiar playground.

I convinced myself that, same as in business, even when you get ready you cannot really get ready, so we better jump in and enjoy the journey.

Immediately once I acknowledged that, so much stress was reduced, I felt ready to start.

### You are not in control

The first moment you actually stand on the snow, wearing your boots, holding the poles and placing your skis and requested to move, brings an immediate understanding – “I'm not in control “. This was a mixed moment. From one side – a glimpse of acknowledgment – “I'm here and I'm doing this” and from the other side the understanding that it is the first step of this long ride which is called ski. A baby step.

The lack of control, for a control freak, led me to be focused. My target was to learn how to control my body and reach a full stop. This target was accompanied by lots of funny and scary moments on my way to accomplish the goal – control.

The first year in every business has a huge similarity – every step brings uncertainties and we always aim to reach control, stability and clarity. Whoever is brave enough not to be drawn away by the scary (and also funny) moments has higher chances to reach the desired control also in the business.

### What if I'll fall (well- get ready to fall!)

When doing ski, it is not a question of “what if“, but a question of “how many times” will I fall and how dramatic it's going to be. Getting ready to fall, to feel the pain, to risk your health, to become injured...are all mandatory when you are doing ski. On the top of that and to spice the experience, you are surrounded by other skiers who crash, fall and get injured constantly near you (the leading ones are the snowboarders), you see all around you snow ambulances, injured adults/ kids, people who fall on you...this is the environment. After a while you are getting used to the thought and then it hits you – YOU FALL! You feel the pain, the disappointment. This can happen in the middle of the slope. Then there comes a huge acknowledgment – no matter what, I won't stay on this slope and I need to go down, you get up, wipe a hidden tear and continue.

I was asked so many times if I'm afraid to fall when doing business. Being so many years an entrepreneur, I always answered that after a while you are not afraid anymore, you know to trust yourself even if you fall. No one likes to fall, to feel pain, but I couldn't help thinking – also in ski, I must learn and trust myself. I will fall and I will get up, I will survive.

(Of course when thinking like this, I lost my focus and immediately fell!)

It's better not to think too much and simply focus on your task, same as in business!

### Find a Mentor, Learn to trust

My ski journey was not possible without having a great trainer so close to me. The trainer job was not only teaching me the basics (climbing, stopping, moving, etc.), but also encouraging me, catching me one second before I'm dead, reaching to me in a hard slope and reflecting me that - yes, I can do it.

My trainer, was 20 years younger than me and he might not know anything about doing business, but in this journey he was my angel. A true mentor that I will never forget.

In business, we often talk about finding a Mentor, not all of us are so lucky to allocate such mentors to show you the way. Still, we can find “little angels” who are professional at what they do and can provide us some spots of comfort in the crazy journey called entrepreneuring.



My vacation was done, but the journey just started. It was not easy, but full of self-reflection and huge steps. I encourage you to go outside your comfort zone, it might give you (as it has given me) the point of inspiration for your next steps.

*(in the picture – a brave lady and her trainer (Niki Kalistrin) after completing 7 km of skiing)*



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