
A P R E O R D E R S A M P L E

Young Founder

The Story of Two Kids Building
Their Businesses From Scratch

A Note to Parents
Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A Note to Parents

Every kid has a moment where they want something of their own. A little money they earned themselves. A thing they made that somebody else actually wanted. A quiet sense that they could build something... if they only knew how to start.

This book is about that moment, and about everything that comes after it.

Young Founder is a story, not a textbook. You'll meet Andre, sixteen, who has no idea what he wants to do with himself, and Sophie, twelve, who just wants a pair of jeans she can't afford. Over ninety days, both of them stumble into building a real business, and they learn (mostly the hard way) the things that actually matter about entrepreneurship. How to find the work that fits you. How to make an offer and say it out loud. How to charge for it without apologizing. How to handle the customer who isn't happy. How to recover when you lose. And how to grow without running yourself into the ground.

The lessons are real. But they ride inside the story, because that is how kids actually learn this stuff. Not from a lecture, but from watching somebody their own age try, mess up, and figure it out anyway.

Here's the part I want to ask you to pay attention to, because it is easy to miss.

Watch the parents in this story.

Andre has a mom and a dad who love him and worry about him in different ways. Sophie has a mom raising her mostly on her own, with an aunt who helps. Two families, two shapes, both real.

Their parents are in it from the first page to the last. Notice what they do, and even more, what they don't do. They ask questions instead of handing over answers. They let their kids struggle when the struggle is the lesson. They hold a line when a line needs holding. And not once do they run the business for their kid.

That restraint is the whole thing. The hardest part of raising a young founder isn't teaching them. It's holding back. It's watching them underprice their work, or lose money on a bad bet, or get fired, and not rushing in to fix it, because the fixing is exactly how you accidentally take the business away from them and make it yours.

Your job here isn't to be the operator. It's to be the safety net. The question-asker. The one who stays in the kitchen when it all falls apart, says "that's a rough one," and then lets them find the next move themselves. If you can do that, you'll hand your kid something far more valuable than a working business. You'll hand them the belief that they can build one.

Maybe you're not the worried kind of parent at all. Maybe you already build things. You run something, you sign the front of the checks, and what you really want is to bring your own kids into it one day. If that's you, this book is for you too, and the rule doesn't change. It just wears different clothes.

Your temptation isn't to protect your kid from the work. It's to hand them a job inside your thing and call it teaching them business. But working in what you built and owning a piece of it are not the same, and only one of them grows a founder. Bringing a kid in the right way means giving them a real piece that's actually theirs, real decisions, real money, real mistakes, and then holding back from grabbing the wheel even though you can see ten faster ways to do it. That last part is the hardest for builders, because you can see the whole board. The kit's Parent Guide has a section written just for you, on how to do it without quietly taking over. For now, know this: the same story that teaches a kid to start from nothing is teaching the exact thing you'll want at your table someday. How to own something, not just work in it.

So how should you use this book? Read it together, or hand it over and let them read it alone, whatever fits your family. Then talk about it. The companion workbook turns each chapter into something your kid can actually do, their own version of what Andre and Sophie worked out. The story shows them it's possible. The workbook helps them begin.

One last thing. There is nothing special about Andre or Sophie, and that is on purpose. They aren't the smartest kids in their schools. They don't start with money or some rare gift. What they have is a feeling that they want something of their own, and somebody in their corner who lets them go find out.

That second part is you.

Turn the page. Let's get started.

CHAPTER ONE

Two kids... no plan

Every founder starts in the same place. Not with a plan, but with a feeling that they want something different, and no clue what to do about it.

Let's meet two of them.



The clock above the whiteboard had a second hand that jumped instead of gliding, and Andre had been watching it jump for most of career day.

One by one, his teacher went around the room, and one by one, everybody had an answer. Marcus was going to be an engineer. Dev wanted to build video games and said it like it was already true. Priya had known she'd be a doctor since she was eight, and when she said it, you believed her, because Priya had never once been unsure of anything in her life.

Andre felt the question move down the row toward him like a slow wave. He tried on answers in his head. None of them fit. They felt like jackets that belonged to other people.

"Andre?" his teacher said.

"I'm still figuring it out."

She smiled, kind enough, and moved on to the next kid. It only

took two seconds. But it sat on him for the rest of the day, through lunch and through practice and onto the bus ride home. Everybody else had an answer. He had a shrug.

The bus wheezed through the neighborhood, stopping and starting, and Andre stared out the window at the same houses he'd seen a thousand times. The question was still there, quiet and heavy. *What do you want to be?* As if he was supposed to know already. As if everyone else got the memo and he'd been absent that day.

His eyes drifted back across the aisle, and that was when he noticed Marcus counting money.

It wasn't much. A small fold of bills, ones and fives, worn soft. But Marcus counted it the way you count something you earned yourself.

"Where's that from?" Andre asked.

"Dog walking." Marcus didn't even look up. "Three dogs, three days a week. Easy money."

Andre thought about that the rest of the ride. Maybe that was it. Maybe he didn't need a big answer. Maybe he could just do what Marcus did. It worked. It was simple. And it would mean he finally had something to say when people asked.

But a small voice in the back of his head kept poking at him. He didn't actually care about dogs. He wasn't scared of them. He just felt nothing when he pictured himself walking one. Doing Marcus's thing because he couldn't think of his own felt like ordering the exact same lunch as the kid in front of you, just so you wouldn't have to choose.

He got off at his stop with a fold of imaginary money already spending itself in his head... and that small voice still poking.



In a bedroom with a closet door that never quite closed, Sophie had wanted the same pair of jeans for two months.

She had a picture of them saved on her phone. She'd looked at it enough times that she could have drawn them from memory. They cost a hundred and fifty dollars.

When she'd finally worked up the nerve to show her mom, her mom had laughed. Not a mean laugh. A "you cannot be serious" laugh. "A hundred and fifty dollars? I wouldn't spend that on jeans if they walked me to school themselves."

And that was the end of the conversation.

Sophie didn't have a hundred and fifty dollars. She had eleven dollars and some quarters in an old lunchbox on her shelf. And even if she'd had the money, she knew exactly how asking would go. So the jeans went where all the other no's went, into the quiet place in the back of her mind where she kept the things she wasn't going to get.

Then, on a slow Saturday, her aunt dragged her to the thrift store.

Sophie almost didn't go in. Thrift stores smelled like other people's closets and old cardboard. But she followed her aunt through the racks anyway, running her hand along the sleeves, not really looking. Until she looked.

There, wedged between a windbreaker and something with

shoulder pads, was a pair of jeans. Not the exact ones. But close. The same deep wash. The same cut. They were too long, and there was a rip at the knee, a lazy one, in a spot she didn't love.

She turned over the tag. Six dollars.

She held them up, and in her head she was already cutting the hem, already fixing the rip so it looked like she meant it. She could see the finished version as clearly as if she were already wearing it.

She bought them with her lunchbox money and carried them home like they were made of glass.



That night, Andre's little sister was falling apart at the kitchen table.

Her science project was due in the morning, a model of the solar system, and she'd glued the whole thing together crooked, so now half the planets were sliding toward the sun. She was crying the kind of crying where you can't really talk, where all you can do is point at the disaster and gasp. Their mom was in the other room, stuck on a work call she couldn't leave.

Andre could have kept walking to his room. Instead, he pulled out the chair next to her and sat down.

"Hey. Look at me. It's fixable."

He didn't actually know if it was fixable. He said it anyway, calm, the way you'd talk to someone standing too close to the

edge of something. And she believed him enough to stop gasping.

Then he looked at the board, and he saw it right away, the thing she couldn't see through her tears. The whole base was glued on a few degrees off, so everything built on top of it leaned. It bugged him, that crooked line, the way a picture hung wrong on a wall bugs some people until they have to get up and straighten it.

They peeled it apart together. He held the base level while the glue set. He talked her through the order of the planets so it would feel like she was doing it, because she was. Twenty minutes later, the solar system sat straight, and his sister wiped her face and looked at him like he'd done a magic trick.

"How'd you do that so fast?"

Andre shrugged, but it was a different kind of shrug than the one in class. He didn't really know how. It just came easy to him. Fixing the thing that was a little bit off. Keeping someone steady while they came apart. He'd always been like that, and he'd never once thought of it as a skill. It was just Andre.

He went up to his room, and for once he wasn't thinking about dogs at all.



At almost the same hour, Sophie sat cross-legged on her bedroom floor with the six-dollar jeans across her lap and a good pair of scissors she'd borrowed without exactly asking.

She measured the hem against her own leg, folded it, and cut. She rolled the cuff twice, the way the expensive pair did it in

the photo. The rip at the knee was the tricky part. A rip can look like style, or it can look like something falling apart, and the whole difference is in the edges. She frayed it on purpose, pulled a few threads loose, trimmed the ones that hung wrong, until it looked like a decision instead of an accident.

When she stood up and pulled them on in front of the mirror, she went still.

They didn't look like the six-dollar jeans anymore. They didn't even look like the hundred-and-fifty-dollar jeans. They looked better, because they fit her exactly, because she had made them fit.

She turned side to side, watching. Something small and warm settled in her chest. She'd wanted those expensive jeans for two months, and it turned out she hadn't needed them at all. She'd needed six dollars, one afternoon, and whatever it was she had that let her see the finished thing before it existed.



The next morning, Sophie wore them to school.

She wasn't halfway down the main hallway before Maya caught her by the arm.

"Okay. Where are those from? I need them."

"I made them," Sophie said. And something clicked, quiet, like a key finding the right lock.

"Wait, you made them? Could you make me a pair?"

"Maybe," Sophie said. She was smiling, and she wasn't totally sure why.

She thought about it the whole walk home, past the same shops she passed every day without seeing. Maya wasn't the first person to ask her about something she was wearing. It happened all the time, and Sophie had always brushed it off. But now she was turning it over, really looking at it.

She could walk into a store packed wall to wall with stuff and find the one thing worth having in about ten seconds. Her friends couldn't. She'd watched them try. To them, a full rack was just a wall of clothes, all of it blurring together. To Sophie it was more like a map, and her eyes went straight to the treasure.

She'd always figured that was just having good taste. For the first time, walking home in her six-dollar jeans, she wondered if it might be worth something.



That night, two kids did almost the same thing without knowing it.

Sophie pulled out a notebook and wrote one line at the top of a blank page.

Things I'm actually good at.

And underneath it, the first thing:

I can look at a pile of clothes and find the one that matters.

It felt a little silly, writing it down like it counted. She wrote it anyway.

Andre lay on his bed and stared at the ceiling, and for the first time in a while the question in his head had changed shape. It wasn't "what am I supposed to want" anymore, the question that made his stomach go tight. It was quieter, and it was his. What am I actually good at. What do I do without even trying.

He didn't have the answer yet. But it was the first question all day that felt like it belonged to him.



Andre and Sophie had never met, and they never would. They lived in different towns and different worlds. One was sixteen and lost. One was twelve and just wanted better jeans.

But that night, without knowing it, they both stopped waiting to be handed a plan.

And they both started paying attention to the one thing every business is actually built on.

Themselves.

Your turn.

Andre and Sophie just did the first thing every founder does. They figured out what was already theirs. You can do the same thing right now, and it only takes about five minutes.

Flip to the Chapter 1 Workbook at the back of this book. There's a short set of questions that helps you find your own answer, the thing you're good at without even trying, and turn it into one sentence you can say out loud. Do it while the story is fresh and the ideas are still bouncing around.

The rest of this book is Andre and Sophie's story. That page is the start of yours.

Four ways in

Knowing what you're good at is a start. It is not a business yet. A business is what happens when you take that thing and turn it into something a person will actually pay for.



The week after career day, Andre couldn't stop watching people. Not what they said they wanted to be someday. How they made money right now, this week, in the ordinary world he walked through every day and never really saw.

Saturday morning, the taco truck by the field. He'd passed it a hundred times without a thought. This time he stopped and actually watched. A guy inside, moving fast, flipping and folding, sliding paper trays through a little window to a line that never got shorter. He made something with his hands, and people traded money for it all morning. Make.

Then Marcus, a few seats up on the bus, counting his soft fold of bills. Marcus didn't make anything. He clipped on a leash and did a job people were too busy to do themselves. Do.

His old math tutor, Ms. Park, drifted into his head. His parents had paid her real money for an hour at the kitchen table, and she'd never made a single thing or lifted anything heavier than a pencil. She got paid for what was in her head. Know.

And Theo, the junior who edited highlight clips for twenty bucks a pop, more around playoffs. He took ugly raw footage and turned it into something people actually wanted. Create.

Riding home one gray afternoon, it stopped being fog and turned into a menu. Make, do, know, create. Almost every way a person earned a dollar folded neatly into one of those four. It was the first time the whole idea of a business had felt less like a locked door and more like a short list of ways in.

And dog walking was clearly a Do, which was exactly why it kept pulling at him. Not because he loved it. Because it was safe.

Andre had always been the kid who wouldn't raise his hand unless he was certain he was right. He'd rather sit on the answer than say it and be wrong in front of everybody. And that carefulness had a source, and the source was his dad. Two years back, Andre's uncle, his dad's younger brother, had quit a steady job to open a food stall. Andre watched the whole family hold its breath, then watched the stall fold in four months and his uncle move onto their couch for a while, smaller and quieter than before. His dad was the one who quietly covered the gap, the way he covered everything, and his dad was the one who'd say, not angry, just tired, that a steady paycheck was the most underrated thing in the world.

Nobody ever said the words "don't take risks." They didn't have to. Andre had absorbed it straight from his dad, from the worry that came into him every time money got mentioned. The safe thing is the smart thing, and wanting something unproven is how you end up on somebody's couch while your relatives talk about you in low voices.

Copying Marcus felt like relief. Marcus's thing already worked. Doing exactly what already worked meant Andre couldn't possibly turn into his uncle.

He tried to picture himself out there doing it. Leashes, poop bags, the same loop around the same block, every single day, before school and after. Nothing came back. Flat gray, a photo of somebody else's life.

And here was the thing he couldn't quite say out loud, even alone in his room.

Being able to do a job and wanting to do it are not the same thing.

He could walk dogs. He'd be perfectly fine at it. But fine and flat were sitting right next to each other in his chest, and some quiet part of him remembered that fine-but-flat was pretty much exactly how his uncle had described the steady job, right before he blew it up to chase the stall. Andre told himself the type fit, and the spark didn't matter, and he almost, almost believed it.



Sophie had the opposite problem, and it wouldn't leave her alone. Her one idea kept splitting in two every time she looked straight at it.

There were two completely different businesses hiding inside the thing she was good at. She could take people's jeans and fix them up, other people's clothes, other people's requests, a Do. Or she could hunt the six-dollar treasures herself, fix them, and sell them finished, a Make. Same skill in her hands. Two

entirely different lives.

Maya's alteration request had been sitting on her desk for three days, and every time Sophie thought about starting it, her whole body found something else to do first. It felt like homework. Somebody else's clothes, somebody else's idea, sewing on demand whether she liked the design or not.

Part of why the "Make" version felt off-limits went deeper than Maya, all the way down into the house Sophie grew up in. Her mom clipped coupons and turned off lights in empty rooms and had laughed at that hundred-and-fifty-dollar price tag, not to be cruel, but because in her family, money was for what you needed, not what you wanted.

Fun wasn't something you built a life around. Fun was what you got to do after the real work was done, if there was any time left, which there usually wasn't.

So the idea that the thing Sophie loved most in the world, digging through racks with her whole heart in it, could be the actual work instead of the reward you earned after, felt almost against the rules. Like she'd be getting away with something she wasn't allowed to have.



That weekend, something lit Andre up, and it caught him completely off guard.

The neighbor two doors down spent all of Saturday on his car. Not a quick wash. A full detail. Buckets of foam, a row of little brushes for the vents and the seams, a machine that hummed against the paint and pulled the color up out of it, so a dull,

tired blue slowly turned deep and wet and brand new right there in the driveway.

Andre drifted to the edge of the property line without deciding to, and then he just stood there. For almost twenty minutes he watched a car go from something you'd walk right past to something you'd stop and stare at.

It was the same feeling he got straightening his sister's crooked project, that quiet satisfaction of a thing going from wrong to right under his hands, except bigger, and warmer, and he realized with a small shock that it was the first time since career day he'd felt pulled toward anything at all.

Not "this is sensible." A pull. An actual want. He didn't even have a word for how different that felt from the flat gray dog picture in his head.

He made himself turn and go inside before it got weird, before the neighbor caught him staring. Watching a car get clean wasn't a business. It wasn't the plan. And anyway, nobody Andre knew detailed cars. Marcus didn't. It wasn't proven, which, according to everything he'd ever absorbed at that dinner table, was a reason to be scared of it, not excited.

He shook it off. It didn't fully shake.



That night, Sophie finally sat down to start Maya's jeans.

She was determined about it. Good light, fabric in her lap, no more excuses. Ten minutes in, she was checking her phone. Then getting a snack. Then straightening things on her desk that didn't need straightening. The work wasn't hard. It just

wasn't hers, and every cell in her body seemed to know it.

So she set Maya's jeans aside, just for a minute, and picked up a thrift find she'd been dying to get to all day. Two hours vanished. She looked up and it was dark and she'd forgotten dinner, and her fingers were sore, and she felt fantastic.

The difference was impossible to ignore now. And sitting there in the wreckage of a happy afternoon, she had a thought that felt almost dangerous to think. Maybe the reason the fun one didn't feel like a real business wasn't that it wasn't real. Maybe it was just that nobody in her whole house had ever once done work they actually liked, so she had no picture in her head of what that even looked like. Maybe it was allowed after all, and she was going to be the first one in the family to find out.

She put the thought away carefully, the way you put away something you're not quite ready to spend. But she didn't forget it. She fell asleep with it still glowing in the back of her mind.



Two kids, two lists of four, both circling.

One reaching for the proven thing that fit the type but left him flat, because the unproven scared him for reasons that went back years further than dogs. One leaning toward the thing that filled her up and half-believing, for reasons that went back just as far, that she wasn't allowed to want it.

Neither had sold a single thing yet. But both had finally stopped asking the question with no good answer, what should I do, and started asking the one that actually leads

somewhere. Which of these is mine?

WHAT COMES NEXT

The rest is in the box.

You just read two chapters and did the first two steps. There are eleven more chapters, and a workbook page for every one of them.

Your box ships before the sprint begins. Inside:

- The full thirteen-chapter novel
- The companion workbook, one chapter at a time
- The Parent Guide, written for your kid's age
- The Door Knock Guide for the first real ask
- Twenty-five idea cards, each with a starter guide
- Four short videos for you, not for them

Keep an eye on your inbox. Everything else arrives there before the box does.