

****INTRODUCTION**

Failure Is Always an Option**

Entrepreneurs are often described as fearless visionaries, risk-takers, rebels, or outliers with an extra spark that the rest of the world supposedly lacks. But after fifty years of starting companies, closing companies, reviving companies, and occasionally flying an airplane into places most people would rather avoid, I've learned something far simpler—and far more accurate:

**Entrepreneurship is not a personality trait.
It is a condition.**

It behaves like something living inside you.
It keeps you awake at night.
It whispers ideas you didn't ask for.
It refuses to let you settle.
And when it goes quiet, you don't feel peace—you feel lost.

If you've ever experienced that internal tension, that restless itch that shows up even when life is comfortable, that urge to fix something no one asked you to fix, you already know what I mean.

Most people think entrepreneurs start companies because they have a great idea.
But the truth is: **we start companies because we can't help ourselves.**

I didn't grow up dreaming about becoming an entrepreneur. I grew up in Dayton, Ohio, the son of two exhausted parents who ran a small printing shop after heart trouble ended my father's short career at NCR, he was only 25. They worked all day, came home at nine, and repeated the cycle until burnout was simply another piece of furniture in the living room.

I wasn't inspired by entrepreneurship.
I was shaped by survival.

When I joined the U.S. Navy at eighteen, I never expected that a strange, highly technical skill—vibration analysis—would become the seed of my first company. I never expected that a foreign-made instrument on a nuclear submarine would eventually lead to a nationwide engineering consulting business with major industrial clients, an airplane, and a team of sharp young engineers. I never expected any of it. And in truth, I wasn't ready for most of it.

And yet, that's where the journey began.

From the Navy to Worthington, to Louisiana, to Atlanta, to Latham, to California, to New York City, and eventually back to Atlanta again, then to Las Vegas and Washington state —my life has followed a pattern of leaping into the unknown, succeeding just long enough to fail in a new way, rebuilding from scratch, and discovering something meaningful on the other side.

Along the way:

- I learned that partners can be more dangerous than competitors.
- I learned that optimism, when unchecked, can quietly sink your ship.
- I learned that business is easy—until people enter the picture.
- I learned that employees can save you or destroy you, sometimes in the same week.
- I learned that good times hide your weaknesses, and crises expose them brutally.
- I learned that failure doesn't kill entrepreneurs; complacency does.

And most importantly:

**I learned that failure is not a sign of incompetence—
it is proof you are alive in the arena.**

Entrepreneurship is not a job.
It is not a career choice.
It is a lifestyle with no off switch.

You do not clock out.
You do not take weekends off.
You do not stop imagining, tweaking, adjusting, or wondering what could be done better.

You see opportunity where others see inconvenience.
You see solutions where others see chaos.
You see the future while everyone else is wrestling with the present.

That mindset is both a blessing and a curse.
It can make you wealthy.
It can break your heart.
It can cost you a marriage.
It can repair a relationship.
It can lift you into a life you never imagined—and drop you into one you never wanted.

And yet, here is the part that matters most:

If you are truly an entrepreneur, you will do it anyway.

Not because you want to.
Not because you choose to.
But because something in you refuses to sit still.

This book is not written to inspire you.
It is written to prepare you.

I'm not offering theories, formulas, or "three steps to success."

I'm offering the truth—the uncomfortable kind, the embarrassing kind, the kind you only admit after you've survived it.

I'm offering history, not hope.

If you want to understand entrepreneurship, this is it:

To obtain success, you must first develop a personal relationship with failure.

It's messy.

It's humbling.

It's necessary.

Kind of like potty training—nobody gets it right the first time, and if they do, they're probably lying.

This book exists because failure has been my greatest mentor.

It hurt me.

It taught me.

It shaped me.

It pushed me into places I never would have gone voluntarily.

And it revealed something profoundly simple:

**Every failure is a doorway. Behind it is the next chapter—
if you're willing to walk through.**

This is Part One of my story.

Part Two is happening in real time.

If you see yourself anywhere on these pages—
if any part of this feels uncomfortably familiar—
then you may already be an entrepreneur.

You might as well learn the truth about the road ahead.

****CHAPTER ONE**

The Navy, Noise, and the Birth of a Skill**

The United States Navy did not shape me into an entrepreneur on purpose. It shaped me because that's what military service does: it pushes you into situations where you either adapt or break. Fortunately, adapting became one of the few things I was naturally good at.

I enlisted at eighteen, and like most young sailors, I didn't fully understand what I was walking into. I expected discipline, order, responsibility, maybe even adventure. I did not expect to spend my days listening to the hum, rattle, and rhythm of machinery deep inside a submarine.

A captain called me into his office one afternoon during my early months on board. He told me the submarine needed someone to perform vibration analysis—a phrase I had never heard before. But someone had to do it, and apparently that someone was me.

He explained that the job was simple in theory:
Find the machines that made too much noise.
Identify the ones that could give away our position.
Measure the mechanical heartbeat of the ship and look for anything that sounded wrong.

Simple—except it wasn't.
This was a nuclear submarine.
The wrong noise at the wrong time could get us killed.

No pressure.

I didn't realize it then, but this assignment was the beginning of my entrepreneurial mindset. I didn't have training. I didn't have expertise. I didn't even have vocabulary for what I was doing. What I did have was curiosity—enough curiosity to pick up the equipment, ask dumb questions, and figure it out.

The analyzer I used was made in Germany, and even as a young sailor, something about that bothered me. Why were we depending on foreign equipment for such a critical task? So I did what would eventually become a pattern in my life: I wrote letters.

Not emails.
Not texts.
Handwritten letters to American manufacturers.

I told them who I was, what I was doing, and why I thought their equipment belonged on U.S. submarines. I expected a polite rejection. Instead, one company shipped me a fifteen thousand dollar analyzer on a “try it and keep it” basis—as long as I wrote a report comparing it to the German unit.

They took a chance on me.
And I took the assignment very seriously.

By the end of that patrol, I had earned a letter of commendation from the captain—the first person in my division to be recognized for this work. I didn't fully understand what that meant then, but looking back, it was the moment I learned two truths:

1. **If you show unusual initiative, people will notice.**
2. **If you go beyond what is expected, opportunities will follow.**

When my six years in the Navy ended, that same company asked if I wanted a job. I accepted and moved to Columbus, Ohio, where I began my civilian career in vibration analysis.

What I didn't realize was that this was only a temporary stopover.

The entrepreneurial condition was already growing inside me.

And it was about to wake up.

****CHAPTER TWO**

Vibranalysis, Independence, and the First Hard Lessons**

Leaving the Navy was both liberating and unsettling. I had spent six years in a world where the hierarchy was clear, the expectations rigid, and the consequences immediate. Civilian life, by comparison, felt like stepping into a room with no walls—full of possibility, but without much structure.

Fortunately, I didn't step into it empty-handed.

I had a skill almost no one else my age possessed.

I knew how to analyze rotating machinery, diagnose vibration problems, and read the “health” of industrial equipment the way a doctor reads X-rays.

That unusual skill earned me an offer from **IRD Mechanalysis**, a company in Columbus, Ohio. I accepted, moved from Charleston, and began what I believed would be a long and rewarding career in the vibration field.

It took about six months for reality to challenge that assumption.

The Breaking point was when the president of IRD, Mechanalysis, told me that Supermen founded the company, but they are now gone. He wanted to be “IBM-like,” with employees in black tie, white shirts, and black coats.

He also told me that he didn't like my constant roaming of the plant and talking with other employees about their jobs. Since I wrote all my reports while I was still on the road, I returned to the company headquarters and had very little to do, so I thought I was trying to learn the business. Yes, I had some interesting sport coats and ties, but OK, that was not the dealbreaker. The dealbreaker was to stop learning, mind your own business, and we'll do fine.

The wife was with me all the way as she recently came to my office in short shorts, and they just about freaked out. Yes - Carolyn is tall with the legs to match. Lucky guy..

The First Taste of Corporate Disillusionment

At IRD, I discovered quickly that I wasn't built for a corporate ladder. The travel was intense, the work often undervalued, and the leadership—at least as I experienced it—seemed more interested in process than progress. I wasn't opposed to structure; I had just spent six years in the military. But I couldn't tolerate inefficiency, indifference, and the feeling that my ideas were boxed in before they even had a chance to breathe.

It didn't take long to recognize a pattern that would repeat itself throughout my life:

When an entrepreneur works for someone else, friction is guaranteed.

Not because the bo my reports while I was still on the road, I returned to the company

headquarters and ss is bad.
Not because the company is flawed.
But because the entrepreneur cannot ignore what he sees—
and cannot keep quiet about solutions he believes in.

My frustration grew into clarity.

If I was going to work this hard, travel this much, and solve problems this difficult, then I wanted the reward, the responsibility, and the control that came with running my own operation.

I was 25 years old.
I had no degree.
I had no mentor.
And I had no roadmap.

But I had something better than all of that:

A grandmother who believed in me more than I believed in myself.

The First Investment — A \$10,000 Gift

My grandmother wasn't wealthy. She taught piano and organ and played the organ in Church every Sunday for 40 years.

She lived modestly and quietly.
But when I told her I wanted to start my own company, she didn't hesitate.

She handed me **\$10,000**—not a loan, not an advance, but a **gift**.
To her, it was an investment in my future.
To me, it was the most meaningful vote of confidence I had ever received.

That money bought my first vibration analyzer.
And with that analyzer, I founded my first independent engineering consulting firm:

Vibranalysis

I had no employees.
I had no marketing.
I had no business plan.

What I did have was a highly specialized skill and the willingness to knock on doors until someone gave me a shot.

The First Company... and the First Failure

Entrepreneurial mythology loves to celebrate the “first big win.”
Mine didn’t go that way.

My first company failed.

Not due to lack of business.

Not dramatically.

Not scandalously.

Just quietly—like a machine that slowly loses power until the lights finally go out.

I had the skill set, the technical ability, the drive, and the work ethic.

What I didn’t have was business maturity.

Or patience.

Or financial discipline.

Or systems.

Or relationships with people who knew more than I did.

But here’s the important part:

That first failure was the spark, not the end.

It didn’t discourage me.

It clarified me.

It taught me what the Navy couldn’t:

that survival in business comes from adaptability, not perfection.

People often ask me:

“What did you learn from your first failure?”

And the answer is always the same:

I learned that I was an entrepreneur.

Not because I succeeded.

But because I failed—and immediately wanted to try again.

The Investor Conflict — Partners, Airplanes, and an Expensive Lesson**

Every entrepreneur eventually faces a moment when confidence becomes overconfidence, and optimism becomes a liability. Mine arrived in the form of an investor deal I misunderstood, a business relationship I misjudged, and an airplane I probably shouldn't have tried to buy when I did.

This chapter happened **before Louisiana, before Atlanta, before California**, back when I was living in **Worthington, Ohio**, while building the early version of **Vibranalysis**.

And it taught me one of the few lessons I can say without hesitation:

Be cautious with partners.
They can cost you far more than money.

The Offer That Looked Perfect

A regional machinery repair company approached me with what sounded like a dream opportunity:

- They would invest **\$150,000** into my business.
- In exchange, they received **the right to purchase 10% of the company**.
- The money was intended to accelerate growth—equipment, travel, expansion.
- I would retain full operational control.

For a young entrepreneur in the 1970s trying to scale a technical consulting firm, that was an incredible offer. Or so it seemed.

I said yes.

What I did **not** understand—because no one explained it and I didn't yet know how to read between the legal lines—was this:

They did **not** own 10% of the company.
They owned the **right to buy 10%** when it benefited them.

Two very different things.

And this subtle difference would eventually gut the deal from the inside out.

The Airplane Problem

Vibranalysis was growing rapidly. We were traveling constantly. Most of our clients were spread across the U.S., and air travel was becoming one of our biggest expenses.

Renting aircraft from the Ohio State University aviation department was helpful, but also limited. I was already a trained pilot, flying hundreds of hours per year, and I understood how much more efficient—and profitable—it would be to own a company plane.

So I did what seemed perfectly logical:

I began the process of purchasing a **Cessna Centurion**—a beautiful, fully equipped aircraft with:

- retractable landing gear,
- room for three passengers plus gear,
- excellent range,
- and the safety features required for long-distance industrial travel.

The price was around **\$65,000**—a strategic move, in my mind, that would pay for itself through efficiency and billing.

But the investors didn't see it that way.

The Perfect Partnership Becomes a Problem

Without warning, they demanded their money back.

Not part of it.

Not a compromise.

All of it.

Suddenly, their “investment” behaved less like capital and more like a **loan they could call in whenever it suited them.**

Their reason?

They didn't approve of how I was planning to use the funds—even though they did not own equity and had no operational authority.

But again, this was my mistake:

I treated the \$150,000 as though it was mine.

I treated the company as though it was entirely mine.

I made decisions as though I had no partners.

The truth was:

If you accept someone's money, they become part of your business—wanted or not.

I returned the full investment.

No drama.

No fight.

Just a painful, humbling, expensive reset.

And then, almost immediately, something remarkable happened.

The Unexpected Door Opens — MTI Technology

Word travels fast in specialized industries.

MTI Technologies in Latham, New York contacted me soon after the investor breakup. They had heard about my Navy experience, my field work, and my growing skill set. They wanted to know if I'd consider selling the business and joining them for two years.

At first, I resisted.

I didn't want to "go backward."

But as I thought about it more deeply, I realized something crucial:

I had reached the limit of what I knew.

And I needed better mentorship and exposure.

The deal made sense:

- Sell the business
- Work at MTI for two years
- Learn at a level I had never accessed before
- Earn a strong salary
- Collect royalties on every sale I brought in

So I accepted.

It turned out to be one of the best decisions of my early career.

I became the youngest, highest-paid, non-degreed team leader in the division, working alongside those with doctorate degrees who had technical expertise far beyond mine—but not the real-world diagnostic instinct I developed in the Navy and on the road.

During these two years, I absorbed everything:

- advanced analysis techniques
- pricing strategies
- sales processes
- client retention systems
- failure diagnostics

- cross-industry applications
- and how major companies handled preventative maintenance

But while my career was accelerating, my personal life was unraveling.

My marriage collapsed.
My wife returned to Ohio.
We divorced.

Only later—after a year apart—did she decide she wanted to reunite.
And so, she moved to Latham, New York to begin again with me.

This period of instability planted the seed for an enormous shift in both my business and family life.

The Lesson That Stuck

This entire chapter in Worthington taught me one lesson I have carried for fifty years:

A partner is not a bandage for uncertainty.
A partner is a magnifier of whatever problem already exists.

After that experience:

- I never accepted outside investments again.
- I never gave equity to friends or family.
- I funded every future company either from my own money or through customer revenue.

It wasn't stubbornness.
It was survival.

And it set the stage for the next chapter—the next city—the next evolution of my entrepreneurial life:

A New Beginning in Latham, New York

Our next journey went through **Latham, New York**, where MTI Technologies had brought me on as their youngest non-degreed team leader.

I received an unexpected offer from **MTI Technologies** in Latham, New York. They knew about my Navy background. They knew about the equipment tests I'd run. They had heard of my work through industry channels and wanted me to join their vibration detection division.

This time, I wasn't walking into an entry-level role.

I became the youngest and highest-paid non-degreed team leader in their department—working alongside engineers with master’s degrees and PhDs thanks to a contract that included a 10% royalty for every sale my group sold

What made me competitive with all those credentials?
A simple but powerful formula:

Experience + curiosity + hustle.

MTI didn’t just give me a job.
They gave me two years of invaluable training—training that my last company desperately needed, and training I didn’t even know I was missing.

While I worked there, my wife (at that time) remained in Worthington, Ohio. It wasn’t an easy season; in fact, it created a separation that eventually led to our divorce. But fate is funny. After a year apart, she decided she wanted to try again, quit her job as a teacher, and moved to Latham to reunite and rebuild our marriage.

For a while, the new job worked beautifully.

And then—after two years at MTI—I felt the familiar itch.

The same one I felt leaving the Navy.
The one I felt at IRD.
The one I would feel dozens of times throughout my life:

**You’ve learned what you came here to learn.
Now go build something.**

It was time to head south—to **Sulphur, Louisiana.**

The Return to Independence — BMR Associates Begins

I left MTI with a new level of confidence and enough knowledge to avoid the naïve mistakes of my first company. I moved forward with a new understanding of:

- how to price services,
- how to build long-term contracts,
- how to negotiate,
- how to manage clients,
- how to design preventative maintenance programs,
- how to deliver consistent results,
- and how to sell solutions, not hours.

This time, I built something far stronger.

New opportunity – New Name

Vibranalysis matured into a more sophisticated company:

BMR Associates, Inc.

Soon we were making **half a million dollars a year**, which in the 1970s was real money—life-changing money.

We didn't just solve emergency breakdowns; we built **preventative maintenance programs** modeled after my experience on the submarine. Instead of waiting for machinery to fail, we caught problems early—saving plants millions of dollars in downtime.

Success was steady.

Clients were multiplying.

And I was finally seeing the advantages of controlling my own destiny.

But success brings complexity.

Complexity brings decisions.

And decisions bring mistakes.

****CHAPTER THREE**

Louisiana Becomes Home

Louisiana, the RV Lab, and the Expansion Years**

Success is rarely a straight line. It twists, bends, dips, and occasionally loops back on itself like a confused roller coaster. By the time BMR Associates began earning close to half a million dollars per year, I felt confident enough to explore bigger opportunities—geographically, professionally, and personally.

What I didn't realize was that this next chapter would reshape my family, my business, and the way I viewed risk forever.

****Why Louisiana? Business.**

Pure and simple.**

Louisiana's industrial corridor was booming with petrochemical plants, air separation facilities, and high-demand rotating machinery—all of which needed vibration analysis and preventative maintenance. It was the perfect environment for **BMR Associates** to expand.

And so, with a newborn in tow, we packed our life into an RV and made the long journey south.

Not just any RV.

This RV became **our first mobile laboratory**.

It was a self-contained command center for BMR Associates:

- storage for analyzers and tools
- sleeping quarters for long trips
- a rolling office
- an easy way to reach Gulf Coast plants
- a practical solution when hotels weren't nearby

But its most memorable feature wasn't business-related.

Above the front seats was a loft area, and inside that loft, nestled comfortably in a suitcase, slept our daughter.

We lovingly called her the “**suitcase kid**.”

It wasn't negligent—it was clever, safe, and efficient. And she loved it. To this day, she remembers that RV as part of the grand adventure of her early childhood.

We settled into life in Sulphur for about **four years**. The Gulf region was ideal for BMR Associates. The RV allowed us to travel to plants across Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi, performing on-site analysis and helping facilities avoid catastrophic failures.

But as the business scaled, the RV eventually became too small. We sold it to my father and invested in something larger:

A full-size trailer, built specifically to transport equipment and staff.

This trailer became the backbone of our field operations.

During this period, Carolyn and I welcomed our second daughter, **Linde**—named, half-jokingly but absolutely sincerely, after **Linde Gas**, one of my largest industrial clients.

And before you ask: yes, Carolyn later regretted giving me naming rights. And yes, Linde actually loves her name.

By now, family and business were intertwined more deeply than ever. But life was calling us in another direction.

Four good years, 100% humidity was enough

The Move to Atlanta: A Turning Point

As much as Louisiana served us, the future of BMR Associates—and the future of my daughters—required broader horizons.

Atlanta offered:

- strong industrial markets,
- better schools,
- more amenities for our young family,
- and strategic access to the Southeast and national clients.

One weekend, we flew to Atlanta, toured neighborhoods, found a condo we liked, and made the purchase on the spot. A month later, we were living there.

It was ambitious.

It was spontaneous.

It was absolutely the entrepreneurial way.

Soon after settling in, I hired an MIT-trained mechanical engineer to help run BMR Associates. He was sharp, capable, and added instant credibility when we met with large clients. More importantly, he freed up my time to pursue something brand new—something bold, disruptive, and risky:

****CHAPTER FOUR**

The Move South, the Suitcase Kid, and the Rise of BMR Associates**

By the late 1970s, my career and life were in motion again—forward, uncertain, and fueled by possibility. After two years with MTI Technologies in Latham, New York, my wife Carolyn and I made the decision that would shape the next decade of our lives:

We moved to Sulphur, Louisiana.

At the time, it felt spontaneous. In hindsight, it was one of the most strategically important decisions I ever made.

Louisiana’s industrial corridor—punctuated with petrochemical plants, air separation facilities, refineries, and massive rotating machinery—was the perfect environment for a vibration analysis company ready to grow from “successful” to “indispensable.”

What I didn’t know was that the move would also turn into one of the most colorful and memorable chapters of our family life.

The RV That Became a Laboratory

Before leaving Latham, we bought a recreational vehicle—part necessity, part adventure—and packed our whole world into it.

Inside that RV were:

- vibration analyzers
- tools
- manuals and equipment
- clothing
- a newborn
- and dreams bigger than the storage cabinets

The RV wasn’t just transportation.
It became **our first mobile lab**.

I could drive directly to plants across Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi, park outside, and get to work without needing hotels or rental cars. There was something wonderfully efficient—and wildly entrepreneurial—about running a technical consulting firm out of a rolling home.

And then there was Elizabeth.

Our daughter was just a baby, and RVs don't come with nurseries. What they *did* have was a loft above the front seats. We turned that loft into a cozy little sleeping nook, and for safety and comfort, she slept inside a suitcase nestled perfectly into the space.

We called her the “**suitcase kid.**”
And yes, she survived it beautifully.

To this day, it remains one of my favorite family stories.

Life in Sulphur, Louisiana

Louisiana's Gulf region was a world unlike anything we had known:

- humid air thick with refinery scent
- plants humming day and night
- a constant demand for high-speed rotating machinery diagnostics
- towns where industrial work wasn't just common—it was life

This was the ideal proving ground for BMR Associates.

I built relationships with **regional** plant managers (not just local ones), and soon we were servicing major facilities throughout the Gulf Coast. The RV gave us mobility, flexibility, and a strange kind of credibility—people respected a business willing to go wherever the work was.

But success meant growth, and growth meant the RV started feeling a little small.

Before long, we sold it to my father and replaced it with something far more practical:

a full-size custom-built trailer designed to carry equipment, analyzers, and staff.

This was no vacation trailer.
It was an industrial command center on wheels.

Inside that trailer, BMR Associates truly began to scale.

Our Second Daughter — and a Name Inspired by Business

While living in Sulphur, we welcomed our second daughter.

Her name?

Linde.

As in *Linde Gas*, the air separation company that was one of my largest and most valuable clients at the time.

Yes, I really did name my daughter after a chemical company.

No, Carolyn wasn't thrilled about it.

Yes, my daughter actually loves it now.

And yes, I still think it's one of the best names I ever chose.

At this point in our lives, business and family didn't just overlap—they were welded together. Our home, our travel, our children, our friendships, our schedule, our stress, our excitement—everything revolved around BMR Associates.

And as the company grew, the walls of Louisiana began to feel like they were closing in. Not because Louisiana wasn't good to us—it was—but because we now needed something more:

- bigger markets
- better schools
- more business connections
- and the ability to serve clients nationally

It was time for another leap.

The Atlanta Decision — Made in a Weekend

One weekend, we flew to Atlanta just to “look around.”

We returned 72 hours later with:

- a signed contract on a condo,
- a new vision for the company,
- and a plan to relocate our entire life—again.

Within a month, we were living in Atlanta and BMR Associates entered its next major phase.

Very quickly, I realized I needed help—technical help, managerial help, and someone credible enough to carry the load as BMR continued scaling.

That's when I hired the MIT mechanical engineer who became one of the most important additions to the company.

His presence gave BMR Associates something invaluable:

Instant legitimacy.

This wasn't just "Barry the Navy tech" anymore.

Now we were a multi-person, multi-state, multi-discipline consulting firm with real engineering credentials. Best of all, hiring him freed me to start pursuing a second business—one that would become a revolution in the printing and catalog world:

CatTrax.

But before CatTrax came the airplanes—and the expansion of BMR Associates into a national, even international, operation.

Because the next entrepreneurial leap wasn't in an office or a trailer.

It was in the sky.

****CHAPTER FIVE**

Taking to the Skies — The Piper Navajo, National Expansion, and the Birth of a Two-Company Life**

Atlanta wasn't just a new home—it was a launchpad.

Once we settled in, it became clear that BMR Associates had outgrown the “drive-only” model. Our customers were no longer limited to the Gulf Coast. Plants in the Midwest, Northeast, and even the Caribbean were requesting vibration analysis, testing, and emergency diagnostics. Phone calls were coming from places you couldn't reach in a day—or even two.

I needed range.
I needed speed.
I needed **wings**.

And so began one of the most defining eras of my entrepreneurial journey.

The Twin-Engine Leap

We upgraded from our earlier single-engine aircraft to a **Piper Navajo**, a robust, twin-engine workhorse capable of:

- flying long distances
- crossing oceans
- carrying multiple passengers
- hauling equipment
- flying safely at night and over mountains

It was the perfect tool for a national—and soon international—industrial consulting operation.

With the Navajo, BMR Associates became something rare:
a precision diagnostics company you could fly in on two hours' notice.

Want to know how to impress regional plant managers?

Show up on the tarmac at dawn in your own aircraft, roll out high-end equipment, and get their compressor trains diagnosed before lunch.

This wasn't luxury.
This was logistics.
And it changed everything.

Over the Rockies and Over the Ocean

The Navajo allowed us to serve clients few competitors could reach.

Trinidad became a regular destination—crossing blue water with the confidence that came from having a second engine humming beside you. Those were the days when aviation wasn't a perk in business—it was a necessity.

Flying over the Rockies at night with nothing but instruments, a horizon of stars, and a cabin full of equipment is the kind of thing that ages you a little, but in a good way. You walk away knowing you've done something hard. Something that matters.

The Navajo made it possible for BMR Associates to become a true national presence.

But it also created the first real tension in my life between:

running a company
and
building another.

Because while BMR Associates was soaring, a second entrepreneurial obsession was quietly taking shape.

The MIT Engineer Enters the Story

Back in Atlanta, I had done something entrepreneurs rarely do at the right time:

I hired someone smarter than me.

The MIT mechanical engineer wasn't just a good hire.
He was transformative.

He brought:

- credibility with major clients
- engineering discipline
- an ability to run day-to-day operations
- relief from my “I have to do everything myself” mindset

With him managing BMR's technical base, I suddenly had bandwidth.
Bandwidth is dangerous for an entrepreneur—it means something new is coming.

And it was.

The Crossroads: Two Careers, One Life

Atlanta gave me the space to dream again.

By day, the engineer handled vibration diagnostics, reports, accountability, and client communication. I still flew, still sold contracts, still served major plants—but I no longer *had* to.

That sliver of free space is what allowed the seed of a new idea to germinate.

Something in an entirely different field.

Something that had nothing to do with machinery, rotating equipment, or industrial plants.

Something... creative.

This idea was born in curiosity, fueled by frustration, and powered by a new revolution happening in the early personal computer era.

It would eventually become:

CatTrax — the company that changed catalog production forever.

But to understand CatTrax, you must first understand *why* I built it—and why the desire to fix inefficiency is the one entrepreneurial trait that never leaves you.

BMR Associates was running strong.

The Navajo kept us flying.

The engineer kept operations humming.

And I was ready—again—to create something new.

****CHAPTER SIX**

CatTrax — Reinventing the Catalog Industry One Pixel at a Time**

While BMR Associates was thriving, another problem had begun gnawing at me.

Every business I've ever built has come from the same impulse:

“Why is this taking so long, and why does it cost so much?”

That's where CatTrax was born—not out of inspiration, but out of irritation.

The Birth of a New Idea

During my consulting travels, I spent a great deal of time walking through printing plants, design departments, and pre-press rooms. These places were the industrial heart of America's mail-order economy—companies shipping thick, image-heavy catalogs to millions of customers.

But here was the problem:

Producing catalogs took months.

They cost fortunes.

And the production process was stuck in the Stone Age.

You had:

- huge teams manually cutting film
- wax rollers
- light tables
- paste-up boards
- photographers shooting one item at a time
- designers marking pages with grease pencils
- editors scribbling corrections in three colors

It was slow, inefficient, costly, and chaotic.

I walked into those environments and immediately thought:

“There has to be a better way.”

And there was—because personal computers were about to change everything.

The Mac Era Begins

Apple had just released early Macintosh computers that were laughably underpowered by today's standards:

- tiny **9-inch black-and-white screens**
- minimal memory
- slow processors
- very limited graphics capabilities

But they had one thing that changed the world:

Desktop publishing.

You could place images, move type, drag boxes, and suddenly build a page digitally—no more film, wax, or razor blades. It was crude at first, but revolutionary.

I bought:

- **one Mac** for \$2,500
- **one grayscale scanner** for \$4,000
- and a wild belief that these two machines could replace entire pre-press departments

Most people laughed.

But then—my first real test.

The \$60,000 Check in Church

One Sunday, standing in a small church in Georgia, a business owner approached me after hearing about my computer experiments.

He handed me a check for **\$60,000** and said:

“Can you produce a 500-page catalog for us?”

Inside I was thinking:

“I have no idea if I can pull this off.”

Outside I said:

“Absolutely.”

Entrepreneurial rule #17:
Say yes. Then learn fast.

CatTrax was officially born.

What Made CatTrax Different

We didn't design catalogs faster because we were smarter.
We did it because we were *forced* to.

The Mac couldn't handle giant image files.
The scanner was slow as molasses.
Printing presses demanded perfect output.

So we invented:

- new workflows
- database workflows
- digital asset systems
- page automation
- photography shortcuts
- naming conventions
- color-correction techniques
- page assembly processes

We didn't follow the rules.
We built new ones.

Clients couldn't believe catalogs could be produced in **weeks instead of months**, and at a fraction of the cost.

The Bookkeeper Disaster & the Lesson of a Lifetime

Up to this point, Carolyn had been my bookkeeper. But once CatTrax grew, she didn't want the additional burden—she had two girls to raise, and the workload was exploding.

So I hired a bookkeeper.

Worst decision I ever made.

He failed to pay our **employee wage taxes for an entire year**, leaving us with a **\$250,000 liability**.

I learned something important:

Never trust anyone else with your taxes, payroll, or financial reporting.

Fortunately, CatTrax had recently secured a major contract with **Harbor Freight Tools**, and that revenue allowed me to pay off the tax hit immediately.

But from that day on:

My CPA reviewed our quarterly reports.

A painful lesson, but an unforgettable one.

The Harbor Freight Transformation

Harbor Freight Tools was drowning in catalog production costs. Their art department had **40 people**—overworked, overwhelmed, and constantly behind schedule.

We stepped in with one proposal:

Cut the art department from 40 to 12, digitize everything, and automate the workflow.

They thought I was crazy.

Nine months later, the Vice President told me:

“We earned back our entire investment with you in less than a year.”

Our system worked that well.

CatTrax wasn’t just a vendor—we became an engine inside their company.

So much so that **80% of my employees chose to move with us** when we relocated to California to be closer to Harbor Freight, uprooting families and starting new lives.

It was one of the proudest moments in my entrepreneurial career.

The California Expansion, the Atlanta Return, and Fate Doing Its Thing

After several successful years in California, I wanted to reconnect with my daughters and my earlier life. So while we kept the California office running for West Coast clients, I reopened an Atlanta office.

This gave me:

- more time with family
- access to East Coast clients
- a balanced geography for both CatTrax and BMR Associates

Around that time, I also married a Delta flight attendant—someone who brought fun, youth, and new energy into my life. We rode bikes, explored California, and then moved together back to Atlanta.

We remained married for 10 years.

And as always, fate had its own plans.

****CHAPTER SEVEN**

Life (9/11 and Aftermath)

The Day the World Stopped — and So Did My Businesses**

There are moments when time doesn't just slow—
it fractures.

Moments when the world is divided cleanly into a *before* and an *after*.

For me, one of those moments arrived on a calm morning in Times Square.

I was sitting in my apartment, reading the newspaper.
The city outside was doing what New York always does—buzzing, pulsing, vibrating with energy.

Then my phone rang.

It was Terri, calling from Atlanta.

Her voice was tight.

“Are you watching the TV?”

I wasn't.
But the second I turned it on, the life I knew ended.

The Unraveling

At first, like everyone else, I thought:

“This can't be real.”

But as the hours unfolded, and the towers fell, and the smoke swallowed the skyline, something inside me broke—not physically, not emotionally, but professionally.

Because my life at that time straddled two worlds:

- **CatTrax**, with operations in New York and California
- **BMR Associates**, based in Atlanta but dependent on national clients—including many deeply connected to the economic stability of the country

New York shut down almost instantly.
Not metaphorically. Literally.

Times Square went silent.
The subways emptied.
The offices shut.
The contracts stalled.
The city held its breath for months.

You could walk down the middle of Broadway without seeing a single car coming.
Restaurants were empty.
Billboards flickered over vacant sidewalks.
There was no laughter, no arguments, no cab horns, no street performers, no music.

It was surreal—like living in an abandoned movie set.

The Calls No Entrepreneur Wants

Within days, the uncomfortable but inevitable reality began to reveal itself.

Clients called—those who could call.

- “We need to pause everything.”
- “Budgets are frozen.”
- “No outside vendors.”
- “We have to redirect funds.”
- “We’re unsure when normal operations will resume.”

A few weeks later:

- **meetings were canceled**
- **projects were tabled indefinitely**
- **cash flow evaporated**
- **and every financial assumption I built the past decade on imploded**

Even *Ogilvy & Mather*—one of the largest ad agencies in the world—shrunk from **six floors to two in ninety days**.

If giants were falling, what chance did a small independent business have?

The Double Collapse

Both companies—CatTrax and BMR Associates—relied on mobility, access, travel, and open doors.

After 9/11:

- travel was paralyzed
- corporate spending froze
- fear replaced strategy
- and the fragile bridges my businesses depended on collapsed

In one blow, **30 years of relationships, momentum, and reputation were gone.**

I didn't panic at first. Shock has a way of cushioning the mind.

But the truth was unavoidable:

I could not save either business.

Not this time.

Not this crisis.

This wasn't mismanagement or a bad decision or a partnership dispute.

This was a global trauma—and I was standing on the fault line.

Leaving New York

Soon it became clear that staying in Times Square made no sense. The city was grieving. The businesses were paralyzed. The contracts were gone. And money was evaporating.

I notified my landlord I would be vacating.

I sold what furniture I could.

I gave the rest to the kind staff in the building who had taken such good care of me.

Then I packed what was left and boarded a flight back to Atlanta.

No celebration.

No transition plan.

No exit strategy.

Just a quiet, defeated retreat.

But that retreat was necessary.

**I wasn't just losing a business.
I was losing the identity I had carried for decades.**

The Hidden Cost: The People

The collapse didn't just affect me.

Some of my employees had been with me for **fifteen years**.

We had traveled together.

Solved impossible problems together.

Saved plants from downtime together.

Built catalogs for companies who trusted us implicitly.

Shared meals, airports, hotels, and long nights troubleshooting equipment.

These weren't just staff.

They were part of the architecture of my life.

And suddenly I had nothing stable to offer them.

Fortunately, they were talented enough to land on their feet. Many found work quickly. Some even grew into bigger roles than they had with me.

Still—it hurt.

More than I ever admitted at the time.

The Emotional Aftershock

People think the hardest part of losing a business is the money.

It isn't.

The hardest part is waking up the next morning without a mission.

No clients to call.

No fires to put out.

No team depending on you.

No problems waiting to be solved.

An entrepreneur without a purpose is like a submarine without sonar—
a vessel moving blindly through dark water.

For months, I felt that darkness.

Not depression.

Not panic.

Just emptiness.

And a question I had never asked myself before:

“What do I do now?”

The Rebuild Begins (Even If I Didn’t Recognize It Yet)

During those early weeks in Atlanta, I tried to process everything:

- the end of CatTrax
- the end of BMR Associates
- the end of my second marriage
- the end of my time in New York
- the end of thirty years of success

But endings have a quiet way of becoming beginnings.

Even if you don’t notice the shift when it happens.

Because eventually, necessity taps you on the shoulder:

You still have a life to live.

You still have a mind to use.

You still have value left to give.

What came next—VideoPhotoBuzz, trucking, the RV build, and eventually SuperVan Adventures—wouldn’t have happened without the collapse.

Sometimes destruction clears the land for something better.

And that’s exactly what 9/11 did for me.

It leveled everything.

But it also opened the path to the next chapters of my life—

the unexpected ones that shaped who I am at 76, working harder and dreaming bigger than many people half my age.

The Birth of VideoPhotoBuzz

I had always loved photography and video. I had tinkered with cameras since childhood. And with Apple computers evolving into powerful video-editing machines, I saw a small opportunity to rebuild.

I started simple.

A **tiny advertisement** in a **local newspaper**.

A **small workstation** in the **basement** of my Atlanta home.

My oldest daughter—home from **Emory University**, studying to become a Baptist preacher—helped during the summers.

Families began bringing in their old:

- **8mm films**
- **VHS tapes**
- **35mm slides**
- **photo albums**

We converted them into digital videos, telling the stories of marriages, children, celebrations, losses, and lives well lived.

Before long, we expanded into full-scale family documentaries—beautiful cinematic tributes shown at:

- funerals,
- anniversaries,
- milestone birthdays,
- retirement parties,
- and family reunions.

Some clients were well-known athletes and public figures. Most were ordinary families wanting to preserve something sacred.

Unlike any business before it, this one wasn't just about solving problems.

It was about healing people.

The Most Emotional Project of My Life

One of our most unforgettable films was for *Joe*—a retired Delta pilot battling cancer.

He and his wife came to us with decades of footage, photos, stories, and truths—some painful, some humorous, all honest.

Joe talked openly about:

- flying in the military
- flying for Delta
- his drinking struggles
- the strain on his marriage
- and his profound love for the people in his life

The final tribute film was shown to **hundreds** of Delta pilots and families.

There wasn't a dry eye in the room—including mine.

In that moment I realized:

This was not a business.

This was a ministry.

A privilege.

A gift.

I would have done it for free.

But Fate Wasn't Finished Yet

Just as VideoPhotoBuzz was thriving, another catastrophe hit—this time economic.

The 2007–2008 financial crisis.

Bear Stearns collapsed.

Lehman Brothers collapsed.

Retirements disappeared.

Home values fell off a cliff.

And my neighborhood—filled with professionals and entrepreneurs—was hit especially hard.

The discretionary spending that fueled my business evaporated almost overnight.

And for the second time in less than a decade, a business I had poured my heart into was gone.

Healing Others Was Easy. Healing Myself Was the Hard Part.

VideoPhotoBuzz remains the only business I've ever built that gave me more emotionally than financially.

Up to that point, every venture had been about innovation, efficiency, speed, or solving big technical problems.

But this one...

This one touched people's hearts.

And it touched mine.

Even now, after all these years, I consider it one of the most excellent chapters of my entrepreneurial life.

For the first time, business wasn't about winning.

It was about meaning.

****CHAPTER EIGHT**

The Road, the Fall, and the Unexpected Rebuild**

After the collapse of VideoPhotoBuzz, I found myself facing a level of uncertainty I had not experienced even after 9/11. I had burned through savings to try keeping the studio alive, and once the economic crash swept my neighborhood into foreclosure after foreclosure, it became clear:

I had to start over again—this time from zero.

But starting over at **my age**, after losing two businesses in a decade, hits differently. It wasn't the same as being 21, fearless, naïve, and excited. This time I felt tired... but not finished.

Then a friend—someone practical, someone who knew I wasn't above rolling up my sleeves—said something that would redirect the next six years of my life:

“Why don't you drive a truck?

They pay well. You're good under pressure. And you need time to rebuild.”

I laughed at first.

Me? After years of engineering contracts, catalog software tools, aircraft rentals, and technical startups—an 18-wheeler?

But the idea stuck.

And then it made sense.

From Uber Rider to Professional Trucker

A Humbling Transition That Saved My Life

Becoming a truck driver requires humility.

There's no title.

No office.

No ego.

No employees.

Just you, a tractor, a trailer, a logbook, and the open road.

I signed up for CDL school in Virginia. The cost was steep, but I qualified for a **state workforce grant** that covered 75% of it. I trained for 30 days, passed the test, and got hired almost immediately.

Suddenly I went from:

- writing \$60,000 invoices
- managing multi-state contracts
- presenting to executives

to:

- backing trailers into docks
- chaining tires on mountain passes
- sleeping at truck stops
- and being the new guy in a deeply blue-collar world

And let me tell you:

It was one of the best decisions I made in my entire life.

I didn't need an apartment anymore—my truck *was* my lodging. My expenses dropped to almost nothing. And for the first time in decades, I had predictable income, no employees to worry about, and no emergencies that could bankrupt me.

My job was simple:

Pick up freight on time. Deliver it on time. Don't hit anything.

After a lifetime of entrepreneurial chaos, that was refreshing.

Six Years on the Road

Truck drivers see America in a way that no tourist ever will.

I watched sunrises in Wyoming.

Blizzards in Montana.

Dust storms in Texas.

Desert nights in Arizona.

Thunderstorms over Kansas.

I ate in diners where people still called you “hon.”

I learned CB radio etiquette.

I learned that trucker bathrooms are the great equalizer.
I learned that loneliness rides shotgun every single mile.

But I was rebuilding—financially and mentally.

And somewhere between the thousands of miles, I found something I hadn't felt in a long time:

Clarity.

The Fall From the Trailer

After six years on the road, it wasn't the economy, or a business collapse, or a partner dispute that ended my trucking career.

It was gravity.

One afternoon, while **unloading my trailer**, I slipped and fell, shattering my wrist.

Eight seconds of bad luck ended an entire chapter of my life.

The injury was severe enough to require:

- surgery
- rehab
- long-term disability
- and eventually a two-year stay in a senior assisted-living facility (yes, much earlier in life than anyone expects)

I couldn't work.

I couldn't drive.

I couldn't lift anything heavier than a coffee mug for months.

But I *could* think.

And think I did.

The Spark of a New Idea: RV Zero-One

During my recovery, I faced a practical question:

What happens when I leave rehab? Where do I live?

I didn't want to spend a fortune on a new RV, so I thought:

“Why not build one myself?”

A DIY project. A clean slate. Something I could control again.

So I ordered a new **Ford Transit van**—fully optioned, exactly the way I wanted it.

And then I waited.

And waited.

And waited.

It took three years for Ford to deliver it.

COVID had shut down supply chains, factories, and shipping lanes.

But eventually the van arrived, and I spent months turning it into a beautiful, functional, self-contained RV.

And I loved living out of it.

It was freedom.

It was simplicity.

It was a new beginning.

But...

When I tried to build RVs as a *business*, I hit a truth I couldn't ignore:

I was not meant to be an RV manufacturer.

It isn't in my toolbox.

So I pivoted.

Again.

From DIY RV to Turo Rentals

I had this great van—new, clean, reliable. My daughter wanted to visit the Pacific Northwest to go tent camping with my grandkids. And renting a vehicle big enough to hold gear for a long trip was insanely expensive.

So I thought:

“Why not rent mine on Turo?”

It worked.

The van helped families explore Washington.

It helped pay for itself.

And my daughter—on her first attempt to drive from Virginia to Washington—learned the hard way what long-distance family travel really means.

She made it as far as **Yellowstone** before giving up.

Five days in the car with kids is not for the faint of heart.

But that sparked the real insight:

People want adventure...

They want camping...

They want to explore...

But **they don’t want the logistics nightmare.**

And that was the seed of something much bigger.

SuperVan Adventures Is Born

The idea was simple:

What if people could fly to the Pacific Northwest and everything they needed for a camping vacation was already here?

I had:

- the van
- the gear
- the RV experience
- the business knowledge
- the desire to solve a real problem

And an even deeper mission:

****“Fill that extra seat...**

Take a foster kid camping.

Not for their benefit—

but for yours.”**

Because adventure heals people.

Nature resets families.

And I believe with my whole heart that some kids just need one weekend to see life through a different lens.

SuperVan Adventures became not just a business idea, but a **purpose**.

A bridge between families who can explore and children who never get the chance.

The Road Ahead

This chapter ends with the business still in its infancy.

The ideas are forming.

The permits are pending.

The tents are tested.

The paths are being carved.

And the winter ski adventure project is already under development.

But like every chapter in my life:

The uncertainty is the best part.

Because uncertainty means possibility.

And possibility is where entrepreneurs thrive.

****CHAPTER NINE**

The Birth of SuperVan Adventures — A Business With a Pulse and a Purpose**

SuperVan Adventures didn't arrive as a lightning bolt.

It emerged slowly—through practical needs, personal experience, and a lifetime of solving problems that “shouldn't” have solutions.

It started with my daughter.

The Problem That Sparked the Solution

My oldest daughter wanted to take her kids on a Pacific Northwest camping trip. They lived in Virginia. I lived in Washington. And she wanted her kids to experience real tent camping—not hotels, not cabins, not screens, but *trees, water, mountains, fire pits, stories, and fresh air*.

She packed the car. Loaded the snacks. Bought the road-trip toys. Cued the playlists. They headed west like pioneers with seat belts.

Five days later, she surrendered in Yellowstone.

The kids were melting down.

The car looked like a science experiment.

She was exhausted.

And Washington still felt a galaxy away.

That moment burned into my mind:

“There has to be a better way for families to take a real camping vacation without driving themselves insane to get there.”

And that was it—the classic entrepreneurial ignition.

A simple observation of pain → a simple desire to fix it.

The Realization: “The Vacation Should Start When You Land, Not When You Recover.”

Families will fly across the country for:

- beaches
- ski trips
- national parks

- weddings
- amusement parks

But tent camping?

That requires gear—bulky, expensive, weather-sensitive gear.

You can't check a tent and four sleeping pads on Delta.

You can't fit coolers, stoves, tarps, lanterns, cots, heaters, and kayaks into a rental Toyota Corolla.

And most families don't want to spend half their vacation in a Walmart buying camping supplies they'll throw away before boarding the plane home.

So the answer became obvious:

Provide everything.

The van.

The gear.

The tents.

The heaters.

The kayaks.

The logistics.

The maps.

The safety plan.

The camp setup.

The teardown.

A full-service camping adventure.

Families fly in with nothing but clothes.

We handle every other detail.

That's when the idea stopped being a concept and became a company.

The Van Becomes the SuperVan

I already had the perfect vehicle—my Ford Transit 15-passenger van.

Originally purchased for family camping and rented on TURO to offset costs, it had already proven itself:

- reliable
- spacious
- safe

- ideal for mountain travel
- ideal for ferrying gear

By removing seats, I created a cavernous cargo area.

By adding gear racks, safety kits, charging systems, and navigation tools, it became a *mobile basecamp*.

This wasn't a rental car anymore.

It was a turnkey expedition vehicle.

The SuperVan.

Early Trial Runs — Proving the Concept

To test the idea, I started with real trips:

Trip #1 — My Daughter's Family

Tent camping for a week in the mountains.

The van performed flawlessly.

The layout worked.

The gear was perfect.

The kids had the time of their lives.

Trip #2 — Local Groups in Washington

I tested various gear combinations:

- four-season tents
- propane heaters
- inverter power
- storage racks
- meal kits
- safety equipment

Each trip taught me something new:

- how to size the tent for different group compositions
- how much luggage families bring
- what children touch, break, lose, or laugh at
- what parents worry about that the kids don't
- and what problems appear only when you're 40 miles from the nearest store

The "product" was evolving with every mile of real use.

The Pivot Toward Purpose: Foster Families in the Empty Seats

Then something deeper surfaced.

Not every family will fill a 15-seat van.
Sometimes they fill five or six seats.
Sometimes just three.

The empty seats bothered me—not financially, but philosophically.

Because during this same period, I met a local woman I hired occasionally to help with moving, cleaning, and driving. She told me her childhood story:

- **foster care**
- **abuse**
- **violence**
- **pregnant twice before 21**
- **a felony from defending herself**
- **no stable family support**

Her life was shaped by chaos, not choice.

And she was one of the hardest workers I ever met.

Listening to her, something clicked inside me:

What if a simple weekend of camping—surrounded by stability, routine, fun, and kindness—could change the trajectory of a foster kid’s life?

Not a sermon.
Not a lecture.
Not therapy.

Just **nature, people, firelight, stars, hot chocolate, and belonging.**

Something real.
Something shared.
Something memories are made of.

And then the line came to me:

**“Fill that extra seat... take a foster kid camping.
Not for their benefit, but for yours.”**

Because it changes the adult as much as the child.

The Mission Expands

Suddenly SuperVan Adventures wasn't just about tourism.

It was about:

- families bonding
- kids learning resilience
- adults rediscovering joy
- giving foster children something stable, safe, and memorable
- helping burned-out parents reconnect
- creating opportunities for healing
- and showing kids a world beyond survival

Adventure as therapy.

Nature as equalizer.

Camping as connection.

This wasn't just a business idea anymore.

It became a calling.

The Devil in the Details (and the Fun of Solving Them)

Then reality arrived with a clipboard:

- insurance carriers
- liability rules
- commercial regulations
- government permits
- U.S. Forest Service approvals
- winter equipment certification
- campground logistics
- theft prevention
- safety protocols
- scheduling systems

- cancellation policies
- weather unpredictability
- gear storage
- gear maintenance
- customer training
- emergency plans

Every one of those issues required:

- ingenuity
- planning
- legal compliance
- money
- creativity
- and stubbornness

Fortunately, stubbornness is my superpower.

I kept pushing.

The Adventure Is Just Beginning

SuperVan Adventures is still in its infancy.

The story is being written in real time.

The winter ski-season pilot program is underway.

Camp setups are improving every month.

Negotiations with USFS are active.

Equipment is being refined.

A franchise model is being drafted.

And the foster-family seat program is becoming a core mission.

The truth is simple:

This business is not just about adventure.

It's about redemption—mine and others'.

And we're only getting started.

Epilogue — Failure Is Always an Option (But So Is Reinvention)

****EPILOGUE**

Failure Is Always an Option — But So Is Reinvention**

If there is one truth etched into the grain of my 50-year entrepreneurial journey, it is this:

**Success is temporary.
Failure is inevitable.
Reinvention is a choice.**

The world tells a polished version of entrepreneurship—shiny logos, smiling founders, elevator pitches, new offices, and “follow your passion” speeches. But the real story happens in basements, late nights, broken equipment, lost clients, unexpected crises, empty bank accounts, and the quiet, private moments when you ask yourself:

“Is this the end, or the beginning of something else?”

I’ve lived enough cycles to know the answer:

It’s always both.

Why I Wrote This Book

Not to celebrate success.
Not to sugarcoat failure.
Not to position myself as a sage or a guru.

I wrote it because **most people misunderstand the entrepreneurial life entirely.**

They think:

- You “learn” entrepreneurship like a recipe.
- You master a skill set and then coast.
- You win once and stay on top forever.

But the truth is that entrepreneurship is a **behavior**, a **trait**, a **compulsion**, almost a **genetic predisposition**. You keep going not because you're confident—but because something in your wiring won't let you stop.

It's like potty training:

painful, messy, and unforgettable—but once you learn it, there's no going back.

The Real Purpose of Entrepreneurship

People often ask:

“What's the purpose of being an entrepreneur?”

I don't believe entrepreneurship *has* a purpose.

It isn't a career.

It isn't a calling from heaven.

It isn't noble or glamorous.

It's simply the life some people are built to live.

What it *does* offer is the chance to:

- solve real problems
- help real people
- build meaningful things
- test your resilience
- explore your creativity
- experience purpose, frustration, joy, and despair—all in the same week

A job gives you a paycheck.

Entrepreneurship gives you a mirror.

You discover who you really are.

What Failure Actually Does for You

Every failure I've lived through had teeth.

It left marks.

Sometimes scars.

But looking back, I see something else:

Failure taught me everything success never could.

- Success inflates. Failure grounds.
- Success blinds. Failure reveals.
- Success comforts. Failure strengthens.
- Success sustains. Failure transforms.

If success is a reward, failure is a curriculum.

And here's the hidden message no one wants to admit:

You are not ready for real success until you've taken a few beatings and kept going anyway.

That's why failure is always an option—
and often the best one.

The Mission Going Forward

SuperVan Adventures is still developing, still growing, still discovering its identity. But it already carries two purposes I believe in deeply:

1. Make camping possible for families who otherwise couldn't or wouldn't attempt it.

Travel shouldn't be limited by distance, gear, or complexity.

2. Use empty seats to heal—not just to transport.

A foster child with one weekend of belonging can form a memory that outlives trauma.

This is not charity.
It's not philanthropy.

It's humanity.

And if this business does nothing more than give a handful of kids a life-changing weekend outdoors, it will already be a success.

From One Entrepreneur to Another

If you're reading this because you think you might be an entrepreneur—or wonder if you're cut out for it—here is the simplest truth I can offer:

You won't know until you try.

And even if you fail, you've learned something that puts you ahead of most people:

You learned what you're capable of.

So start small.

Start young if you can.

Start old if you must.

Start scared.

Start broke.

Start confused.

Start imperfect.

Just start.

Because the only guarantee in entrepreneurship—and in life—is this:

You can always reinvent yourself.

If you're still breathing, you're still in the game.

Part Two Is Coming

In April, the next part of this journey begins—not as speculation, but as history being recorded in real time. Winter operations, ski trips, USFS partnerships, foster-family adventures, and the evolution of the SuperVan model will all become Part Two:

Failure Is Always an Option: The Living Chapters

Stay Connected

If you'd like updates, blog posts, behind-the-scenes photos, and stories from our winter excursions, you can follow the journey at:

SuperVanAdventures.com

Join us there.

The road ahead is long, unpredictable, and full of potential—
just like every great adventure.