Chapter 1: Why Solopreneurs Struggle With Burnout

Being a solopreneur means being an entrepreneur that runs *everything* themselves. There are countless advantages to this kind of business model, and thanks to the web, it's now more feasible for more people than ever before.

The notion of running an entire *empire* single-handedly would have seemed like an impossible pipe-dream only a few years ago. Today though, this is what more and more people are living as their reality. The internet is such a powerful force multiplier that it allows many people to truly become "digital polymaths."

Take video game development as a perfect example. Once upon a time, during the days of the ZX Spectrum and other early hardware, it was possible for a single developer to create a game in their basement and release it to the world to mass acclaim. But then computers developed further, and computer game graphics became photo-real. Today, the budget for a "AAA" title is gigantic, and the projects require thousands of people working around the clock for *years.*

For many years, it was impossible for a single developer to compete with the major game studios. But then things changed.

Tools like Unreal Engine and Unity provided ready-made physics and graphics rendering pipelines, even providing drag-and-drop interfaces for developers to streamline production. Then came freely available assets such as 3D models, music, textures and more: created by the community and distributed with a creative commons license. Often these were free.

Suddenly, a single developer could leverage powerful tools and the hard work and creativity of the community to develop a game that would look

almost as graphically impressive as something built by a much larger studio.

And slowly, the industry saw the rise of the "indie developer." Solo projects like *Hyper Light Drifter, Undertale, Minecraft, Thomas Was Alone, Stardew Valley, Spelunky, Braid, Cave Story* and others have gone on to sell *millions* of copies!

Then there are the distribution platforms that allow individual creators to upload their projects to be easily discovered. There are video and photo editing tools that make it easier than ever before to create marketing materials. And there are forums, social media platforms, and SEO, that help creators to reach a massive audience.

A single person can be an *entire* games business. And by taking this route, they can potentially reap HUGE rewards. Not only do they get to bring to life their creative vision, but they also get to take home all of the profit for themselves.

Building a game is not an easy project, though. It still requires a huge amount of hard work, coding skill, passion, and creativity. The most successful indie games also manage to sidestep the issue of "photorealism" with striking graphical styles that help them to stand out, while also reducing the amount of work necessary for the creator.

But this is just one example of how tools can empower individuals to take on much larger organizations. There are countless other examples of this: from owners of successful blogs to creators of highly popular YouTube channels. You can be an affiliate marketer. You can make money reselling hats or any other physical product.
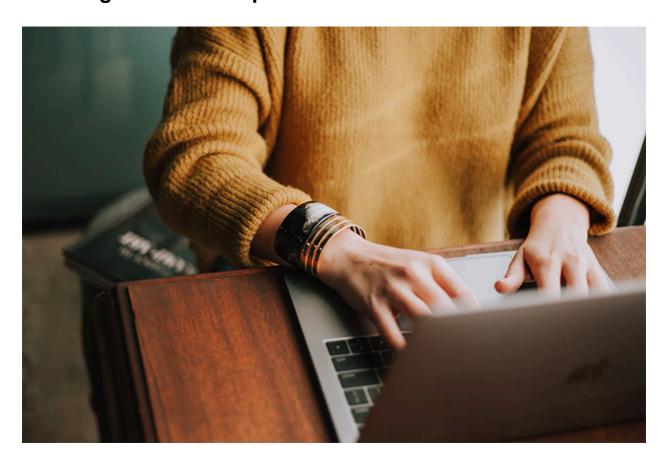
The latter is a business model that has been *particularly* transformed by the power of the web: thanks to sites like Alibaba it's now possible to work

directly with manufacturers that will produce your products and then deliver them directly to your customers. The best part is that they don't even reveal themselves, meaning that, as far as the customer is concerned, you have your own factory!

Any of these business models are available to the proactive individual who is willing to learn and who knows how to spot an opportunity. With a little creativity, you can even create your own business model that simply didn't exist before!

Challenges of the Solopreneur

But while the solopreneur lifestyle is liberating in many ways, it can also be extremely challenging. That's because it requires you to wear a lot of hats and to take full responsibility for every aspect of your business.