





## B/ Six Ways



# My Biggest Change as a Leader

Mindset shifts are hard, but they can be the key to success. We asked six business leaders how they began to look at things differently.

### 1/ Growth → Resilience

"At my last venture-backed company, I had a 'growth at all costs' mindset—often making decisions that looked great for top-line growth but didn't build a rock-solid foundation. Looking back on our less-than-stellar exit, I see all the ways we could have built a more resilient company. So when we started Frank Darling, we knew we wanted to bootstrap it, make fiscally responsible decisions, and build a strong culture and organic foundation. The irony? We've grown faster than my last company ever did."

—KEGAN FISHER, cofounder and CEO, Frank Darling

### 2/ Having answers → Sharing problems

"A key turning point came when I realized that as a founder, I didn't have to have all the answers. I began to view our investors not just as financial backers, but as strategic partners. I started sharing our toughest challenges with them, and they often brought fresh ideas and even actionable solutions I hadn't considered. Then I decided to share financials openly with the entire team. When the team is empowered with information, they often come up with innovative solutions."

—KAT DEY, cofounder and president, Ettitude

### 3/ Comparing → Focusing

"I realized that constantly comparing my small brand to better-funded competitors was draining my energy and overshadowing our actual strengths. I began focusing on things we could genuinely excel at. Instead of spreading ourselves thin trying to match every big campaign or trend, we focused on doing a handful of things exceptionally and in our own unique way."

—CHELSEA RIGGS, CEO and founding member, Amika

### 4/ Hunkering down → Persisting

"Early on in my journey, every little setback would derail me. This often made me a hermit instead of a leader, discouraged my team, and limited all of our productivity. After a few years, I realized things were never as great or as bad as they seemed in the moment. A peer founder told me to take the 90-day trailing average of my sentiment as a more reliable snapshot of the business. So I learned to execute excellently on what I can control, let go of what I can't, and trust the process from there."

—BRAD SAVAGE, founder and CEO, Gardencup

### 5/ Snap judgments → Open listening

"I'm a type-A personality and very driven. I come to conclusions quickly and tend to jump to the end of a conversation even quicker. I have learned to slow down and listen more with an open mind to whomever I'm speaking with. Here was a major breakthrough: I needed to understand that the person I'm speaking with may have just gone through something very difficult, and that's what caused them to behave differently than their norm. Once I understand a situation, I now place myself in their shoes before determining next steps."

—HENRY PENIX, CEO and executive chairman, Soak Technologies

### 6/ Insisting on perfection → Imperfect action

"Early on, I had a tendency to hold off on launching new products until everything felt absolutely perfect. But as we grew, I realized that waiting too long meant missing opportunities. Now I view product releases as iterative—getting them to market faster, gathering feedback, and continuously improving. This allowed us to expand our product lines more rapidly and stay ahead of trends—especially in our press-on-nail category. I was able to move faster, respond to customers' needs in real time, and ultimately strengthen the brand's position in a competitive market."

—ANN MCFERRAN, founder, Glamnetic

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