A FREE SAMPLE BY

William Christopher Skelley

Founder Foundations

Structure, relationships, and the right investor

WEBSITE SAMPLE EDITION

SAMPLE

FREE PREVIEW · DA NANG · OPERATOR COURSE

williamskelley.courses · wskelley.substack.com

Not the full paid workbook. Not legal advice. Capital is a relationship.

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WHAT THIS SAMPLE IS

This is a free preview of Founder Foundations, a private personal workbook for founders who want to raise like adults.

The full course has nine sections. Each section has three parts:

- A personal story from my work as an operator and founder.
- A lesson stated in plain language.
- A ten question worksheet with room to write.

This sample gives you one complete teaching section so you can feel the voice, the design, and the worksheet format. The other eight section titles appear later in this preview. Their teaching body stays inside the full workbook.

If the voice fits, get the full workbook at williamskelley.courses and work the rest in order.

This is operator education from someone who built and sold. It is not legal advice, tax advice, or investment advice. Hire counsel in your country when money, equity, or regulated claims are on the line.

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ABOUT ME

I am William Christopher Skelley. I live in Da Nang, Vietnam. I write, advise, and build.

My father spent roughly twenty five years running Polaroid across the Western Hemisphere. When he left that world in the early 2000s, startups were already the family business. I worked with him on companies in Boston and Silicon Valley. I lived through the 1999 crash as a young operator, not as a spectator. Marketing, pitch decks, business analysis. That chapter still sits under everything I teach. Respect for other people's money. Clear sentences. No theater.

Before I founded anything of my own I worked at General Electric, Bain Capital, and Olympus out of New York reporting to a Tokyo board. I spent time at Rose Park Advisors, Clayton Christensen's fund. I attended Harvard Business School's Owner President Management program. I did not treat it as a finished degree. I treated it as a room full of operators.

I founded iFunding, one of the early real estate crowdfunding platforms in the United States. We raised nearly thirty million dollars across deals on the platform. When it was time to raise for the company itself, we crowdfunded the crowdfunding platform. I exited in 2017.

Across roughly thirty years I have been inside more than forty startups in one seat or another. My bias is settled. Fewer, better investors. Big enough to matter. Aligned enough to help. Calm enough to let you work.

I teach this course because founders keep copying the loudest fundraising advice on the internet. Loud advice creates crowded cap tables and thin relationships. I want you to raise like an adult.

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5. ONE SERIOUS INVESTOR BEATS A TINY CROWD

Story

This is the lesson I wish more founders heard early, because I paid for it in attention.

I am not against crowdfunding. I built a crowdfunding company. I crowdfunded our own equity raise toward two million at a twenty million dollar valuation, and the story worked because the market position was sharp. We were not another startup that needs money. We were the platform raising the same way we asked the world to invest in real estate, and we had already put nearly thirty million dollars of project capital through the machine.

What I am against is accidental crowdfunding of your cap table. Twenty investors at five thousand dollars each is one hundred thousand dollars and twenty relationships. One investor at one hundred thousand dollars is one relationship. The admin cost is not equal. The emotional cost is not equal. The person with five thousand dollars often feels they bought the right to critique your week. The person with a real check usually wants you to run the company.

After roughly thirty years and more than forty startups, my bias is settled. Fewer, better investors. Big enough to matter. Aligned enough to help. Calm enough to let you work.

Lesson

If your category is crowded, do not add volume to your investor list. Add contrast to your position.

- Be first at something real.
- Be clearest at something real.
- Be the team that already lived the pain.

Then raise from people who want that contrast, not from everyone who has a checkbook and an opinion.

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WORKSHEET

5. One serious investor beats a tiny crowd

Answer in your own words. Leave no line blank to avoid the answer. These questions are for you.

1. Write your “only we” line in one sentence.

2. Could a competitor say the same line today? If yes, rewrite until they cannot.

3. How many investors are on your dream list right now?

4. How many of those names would you gladly take a serious check from?

5. What is the smallest check size you will accept, and why that floor?

6. Which current target is really a loud five thousand dollar relationship in disguise?

7. What contrast do you already have that press could repeat without a glossary?

8. What contrast are you still faking?

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9. If you could keep only three investor relationships for seven years, who are they?

10. What will you say the next time an easy tiny check appears with loud expectations?

END OF SAMPLE SECTION · FULL COURSE HAS EIGHT MORE

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WHAT'S INSIDE THE FULL COURSE

The full Founder Foundations workbook includes nine sections. Each one follows the same pattern: story, lesson, ten question worksheet.

- 1. The sentence and the relationship
- 2. Structure is how you show respect
- 3. Compliance mindset, not lawyer theater
- 4. Raise timelines by stage
- 5. One serious investor beats a tiny crowd (included in this sample)
- 6. Materials that serve the relationship
- 7. Diligence is a character test
- 8. Process from first chat to wire
- 9. Capstone: raise like you have done it

Teaching body for sections other than this sample stays in the full workbook.

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GET THE FULL WORKBOOK

If this sample felt useful, start the full course.

VISIT

williamskelley.courses

Get the full Founder Foundations personal workbook. Work every section in order. Fill every worksheet. Protect your time.

> Build carefully. Position differently. Prefer fewer investors with real checks.

William Christopher Skelley
Da Nang

AI assist note

I use AI tools to help me draft and edit. The outline, ideas, judgments, and stories are mine. They come from my work as a founder and operator, not from a model inventing a life I did not live.

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