

BELONG

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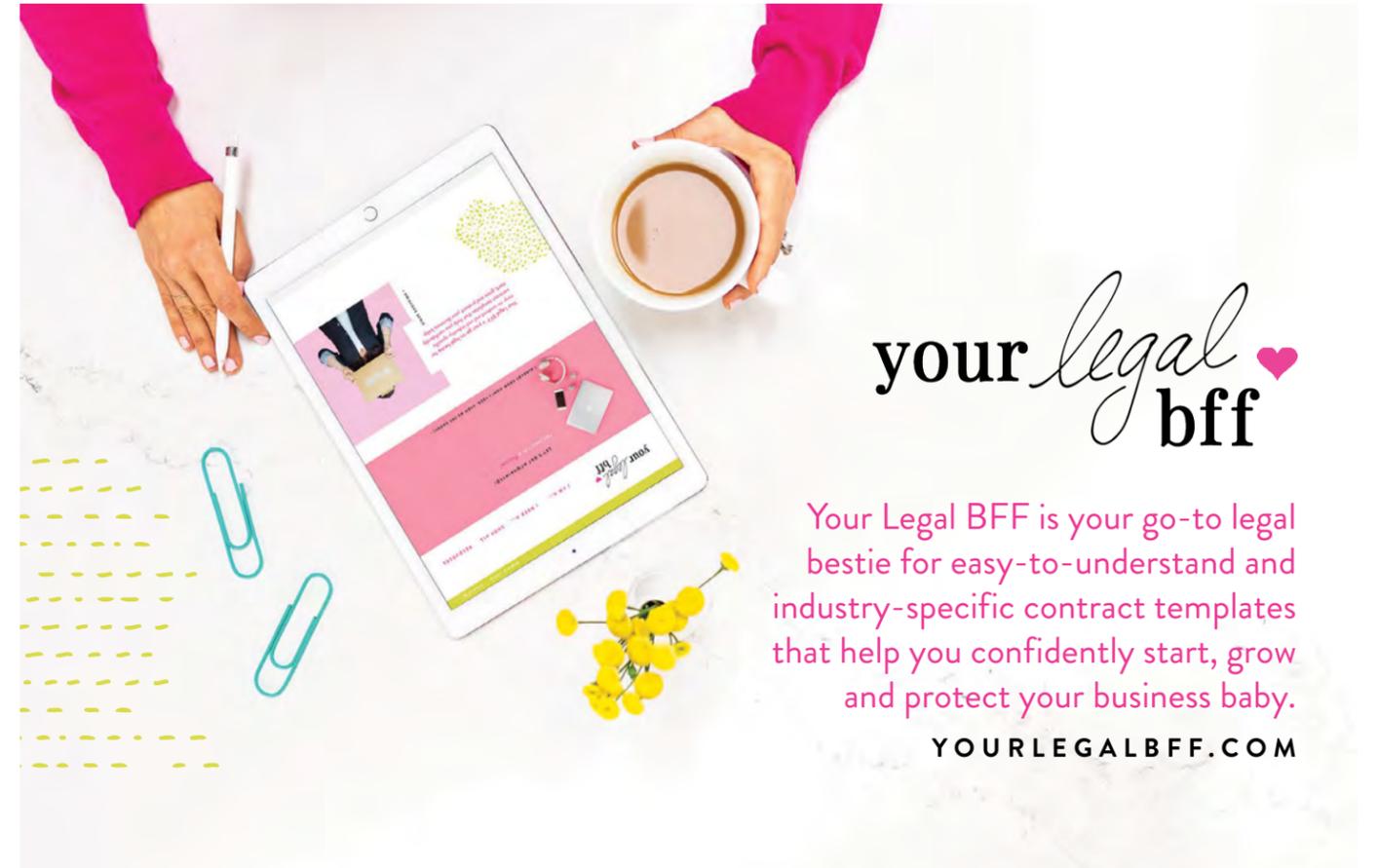
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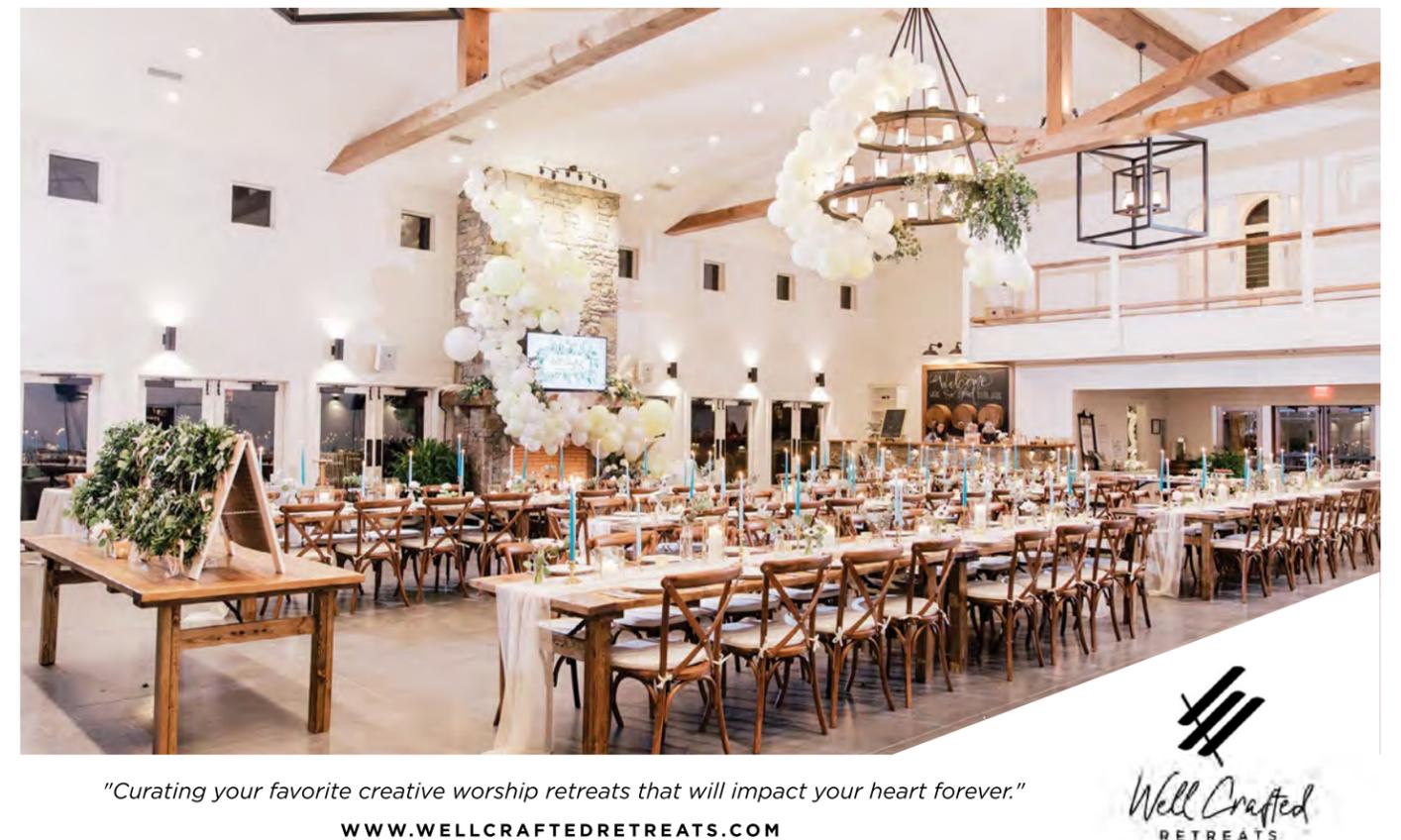
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COVER

COCO TAFOYA, DELUXEMODERN
@DELUXEMODERN
WWW.DELUXEMODERNDDESIGN.COM



BELONG MAGAZINE / ISSUE FOURTEEN

Brooke Saxon-Spencer
Founder + Editor
Laura Kashner
Publication Designer

Caleb Spencer
Contributing Editor

cultivate

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR



Brooke Saxon-Spencer
founder + editor

WWW.BELONG-MAG.COM
@BELONGMAG

“If you’re not growing, you’re dying.” This quote can be attributed to several people, but the truth remains the same. If we’re not thoughtfully investing and being intentional with our time and energy, we are not likely to see progress and could potentially even experience atrophy.

Whether you’re just starting out or you’ve been at this whole entrepreneurship thing for many years, it’s always the time to cultivate. Really, this applies to all aspects of life: business, relationships, personal life, etc...

I know what you’re thinking: this seems like busywork, and we all know there is not enough time in the day for another *thing*. But to cultivate, you might actually have to *stop* doing. Take a step back, evaluate (or reevaluate), get a fresh perspective. All of these things are necessary for us to know what we should be investing our valuable time in.

There is no magic in the hustle. You have to have purpose. There is no prestige in having a full schedule. You have to be intentional. We can keep spinning our wheels or we can get out of the car and check out the view for a bit before we continue the drive.

ISSUE 14 is focused on the theme “cultivate” with the hopes of providing motivation and inspiration for you. I even share the story of how Belong was built in this issue—something I’ve never done. May the words on these pages serve as encouragement to you.

Brooke Saxon-Spencer

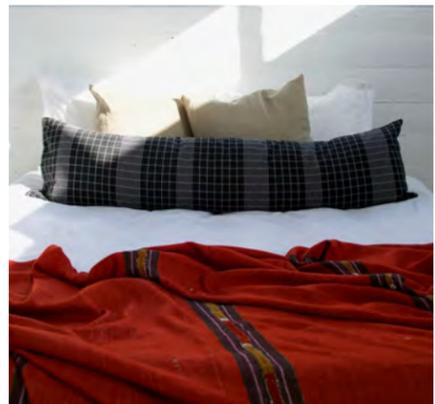
P.S. These are my favorites tools for building and cultivating:

- PowerSheets from Cultivate What Matters
- *Make it Happen* and *Cultivate*, by Lara Casey
- Journaling with my ban.do mini rough draft notebooks—they’re the best

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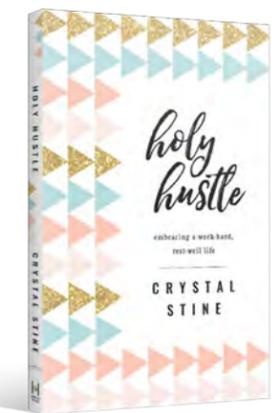
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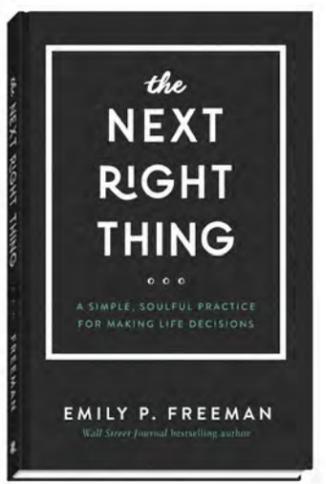


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THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY TO DEVELOP

Your Business Savvy



by **Ashland Viscosi**
WWW.CMBATX.COM / @CREATEMEETBIZ

Recently I was having a conversation with my aunt who is also an entrepreneur. The subject of the conversation? How to be successful in business. After a string of disappointments with vendor relationships, my aunt and I were reflecting on the qualities and attributes that today's freelancer or business owner needs. After a hearty discussion, we agreed on the following: be kind (you don't even have to be "nice," just considerate) and do what you say you're going to do. That's it. Doing what you say you're going to do, delivering it when you say you will, and doing it kindly will set you FAR above the pack.

Already have that mastered? Here are 7 things you can do TODAY to develop and further hone your business savvy.

HEADSHOT BY IDEOLOGY PHOTOGRAPHY • PHOTO BY DEAR CHIC MODERN

CREATE AND USE A BUSINESS EMAIL ADDRESS.

It's incredibly likely that you already have a company or personal website. If you don't, you should. If you own a domain, for a very small monthly fee (starting at \$5 for Google's basic version), you can have a business email address through Google's G Suite. Having yourcompanyname@gmail.com doesn't send the same note of professionalism that yourname@yourcompanyname.com does. Taking this small (and affordable) step makes a very big difference in how you're perceived.

SPEND TIME NETWORKING OUTSIDE YOUR CREATIVE DISCIPLINE OR INDUSTRY.

It's easy and comforting to spend time with the people you already know and who speak the same (creative) language as you. Your collaborators are your community, but *spoiler alert!*, they aren't your customers.

Now here's the kicker: most new information and opportunities come to us through something called a "weak tie." A weak tie is someone who sits at the edge of your network. Because they spend more time in other "circles" (creative disciplines or industries in this case), they're more likely to bring new information and new people your way than folks you already know. They might know of contract work, opportunities, people you should connect with, etc., but these opportunities will remain out of reach if you don't leave your comfort zone from time to time.

BE PER-FESSIONAL.

Being professional is important. This includes: responding in a timely fashion, making sure your emails aren't riddled with typos and grammatical errors, etc. Perhaps what's even more important though is remembering the "personal" element of communication. You're a person with a unique personality and so too is the person on the other side of the screen. Don't change your tone so much that, in an effort to be professional, you sound stiff and wooden, and frankly not yourself. Maybe you'll want to hold back on that extra exclamation mark you planned to use (and that's the **professional** part), but don't hold back on your **personality**.

SCHEDULE TIME TO RUN THE BUSINESS.

Working on the artistic and creative part of any task is rewarding, fulfilling and fun, but the business can't run without you, and it needs some TLC too.

Instead of making sacrifices to your creative process, schedule time on your calendar to work on the business. Perhaps you start each day by responding to

emails for an hour, two hours on Mondays invoicing for the previous week, 30 minutes on Tuesdays searching Facebook for a networking event, and 30 minutes on Thursdays to add connections to LinkedIn. Create a system that works for you; one that allows for full-fledged creative flow *and* one that helps the business flourish.

MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE.

I mentioned this earlier, but really, grammar and spelling are important. If you want to take a tech-based approach, you can download applications like Grammarly (free and premium options available) that help keep your spelling in check. Likely though, you'll be good to go with your own set of eyeballs. Re-read emails BEFORE you hit send (it doesn't help much to read it after you've sent it, unless you "Undo Send" through Google...which has to be set up prior to your first undo). Another top tip, after you've crafted the document or important email (I'm not advocating this level of care for every email you send), save it and let it sit. Re-read it with a fresh set of eyes and look for mistakes and errors. If you don't trust your own set of eyeballs, have a friend, colleague, business partner (you get the idea), read it for typos and mistakes. The more important the document or email, the more necessary it is to give it a thorough readthrough and to correct mistakes. Investing the time in editing your work will be *well* worth it, scout's honor!

Speaking of spelling, there's a few more things you should pay close attention to...the name of the person you're writing to and capitalization and punctuation that the company uses in their name. While you won't be awarded brownie points for spelling these properly, you will be spared the strike that will certainly be held against you.

INVESTING IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Hopefully you're already budgeting, saving money for taxes (if you're self-employed or own your own business), saving for retirement, etc. The intention here isn't to go all financial on you, we'll save that for a future article, but it is to introduce an important budgetary line item – your professional development. Research available opportunities and create a budget for it. You can go the in-person route (recommended as you get the added bonus of networking) with conferences, festivals, workshops, speaker series, panels, and more. If your preference is to learn all you can by spending time with your screen and mobile device, there's options too.

If you find an event that you REALLY want to attend but can't afford it, reach out to the organizer and see if you can volunteer for a seat or ticket. Talk about win-win!

“What works best for me is to spend some quality time with my inbox each morning, with a cup of coffee in hand, and map out my other to-dos for the day.”

CREATE A DAILY SCHEDULE FOR MANAGING YOUR INBOX.

I've always had a lovely relationship with my inbox until recently. Two weeks ago, I achieved the highly praised "inbox zero." And I couldn't hate it more. My productivity has decreased, and I constantly feel stressed and panicked. Because now that I've achieved inbox zero, it has to be maintained...

I'm breaking up with inbox zero and going back to my old faithful: a daily schedule for checking and responding to emails. What works best for me is to spend some quality time with my inbox each morning, with a cup of coffee in hand, and map out my other to-dos for the day. I then work through the to-dos and ignore my inbox (oftentimes closing down the email client) until the afternoon when I again dedicate some quality time to my inbox. Instead of it being a time-filler, it's something I actively participate in and dedicate time to. Depending on your profession, it may be impossible to shutter the inbox for hours a day, but if you're able to, I strongly recommend it. Create a daily inbox schedule that works for you and honor it. ☺

Ashland Viscosi is the founder of Creatives Meet Business and the Creatives Meet Business Experience for artists, creatives, and entrepreneurs.



How to Develop Habits for Massive Growth

HEADSHOT BY SHANELY COX • PHOTOS BY SOCIAL SQUARES



by **Jenna Murillo**

WWW.WORKSPACERY.COM / @WORKSPACERY

How do you think about success? Well, if you've never dug deep into the story of a successful individual or company, it may feel like it just happened; they just happened to score that mega deal, the company just happened to create a product no one can live without.

But when you start uncovering the truth behind most success stories, you'll find one thing in common: it definitely wasn't an overnight success.

In fact, most accomplishments and successful ventures happen due to a lot of small things along the way: day after day discipline and determination and small actions inching them along, little by little.

This headstrong discipline and repetition of small actions can often be attributed to the power of habits — the little things we do every single day that contribute toward the bigger picture of who we are and where we're going.

THE SCIENCE OF HABITS

Without realizing it, you probably have a lot of automatic habits in place already. Our brains rely on habits for making small, routine decisions, with the intention of freeing up mental resources for dealing with new situations and bigger decisions throughout the day.

The good news is that your brain not only relies on these habits — it's also always looking for new opportunities of experiences that can become habits in your life. This means when you're ready to change an existing habit or introduce a new habit into your daily routine, your brain is on your side to make this happen.

Habits are made up of a three-part cycle: the trigger, the routine, and the reward. The trigger is the thing that tells your brain to initiate the routine. The reward is what you or your brain receives as a reward for completing the routine. As Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit* mentions, however, many people fail to understand this cycle and, thus, fail to create a reward that satisfies positive habits.

Habits like eating healthier or meditating don't have built-in immediate rewards — these goals have long-term (and longer lasting) rewards. So finding more immediate ways to reward yourself for tasks completed will help encourage the habit cycle you're building.

WHY HABITS MATTER

Habits make up a large part of our lives, shaping our days and weeks with automatic routines we've created for ourselves, either consciously or subconsciously. They can propel our progress, keep us stuck in one place, or even slow us down in any part of our life. For example, if you have a habit already in place to reward yourself with a candy bar as a mid-afternoon snack, that's certainly putting a damper on your health goals and energy level (hello, 3pm sugar crash).

By analyzing our existing habits and altering them to create more positive routines with relevant rewards, we can completely change the bigger picture of progress in our health, growth in our work, increases in our productivity — the positive implications are endless!

“Don’t wait for a brand new year to start changing your life and business through the power of habits; make it happen today, or if needed, by tying these shifts to a physical change that will help reframe your mindset.”

HOW TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH YOUR HABITS

Your habits and routines are very personal to you, but there are a few foundational notes to keep in mind in order to cultivate powerful habits with lasting impact in your life and business.

1. Start with ONE habit shift.

Your brain might be whirring with lots of ideas at this point for what you’d like to change for the better in your life or business, but my recommendation to you is to start with one simple habit shift. And even better, tweak an existing habit. This means the trigger is already in place, but it’s up to you to change the routine for the better, and then tweak the reward so it still sends a dose of satisfaction to your brain to prove the new routine is worth your time and energy.

2. Make it specific.

When creating any habit, specificity is key. It’s not enough to say you want the routine to be “eat healthier” — what does that mean exactly? Is this habit designed to encourage you to eat a southwest chicken salad everyday for lunch? Maybe Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are specifically salad days. Keep it specific so you know exactly how to execute on the routine.

3. Know the bigger reason.

What’s the bigger picture for your habit? Why are you trying to eat healthier or be more productive, for example? Having a clear reason in mind is a great motivator for staying consistent and dedicated to your new or redesigned habit. Write this down in your planner, on a sticky note, and keep it somewhere that you’ll see it on a regular basis. It’s amazing how quickly we can stray from positive habits when we have nothing tying our mindset to the bigger picture every single day.

4. Break down your big goals into smaller habits.

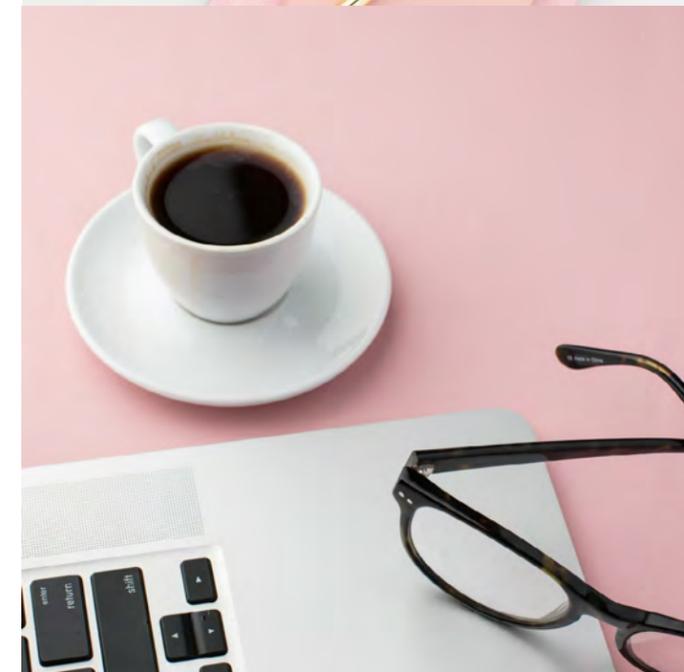
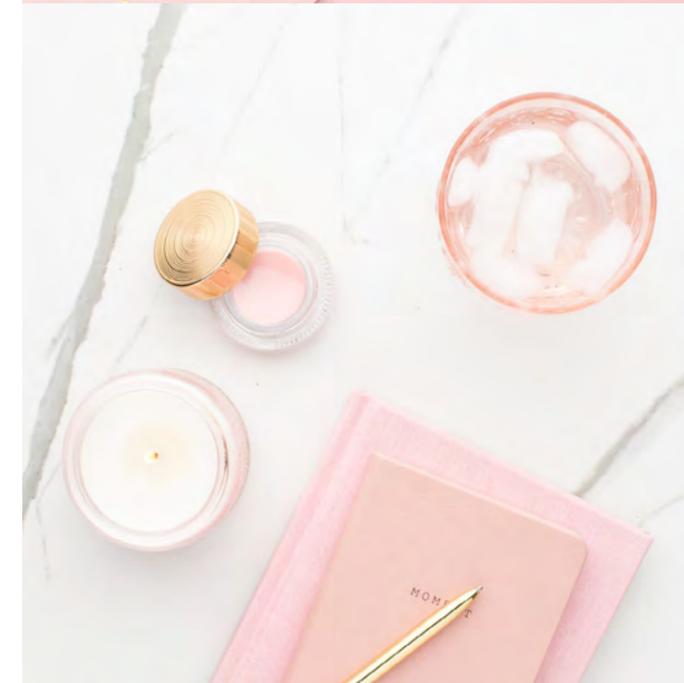
Habits are essentially little, tiny daily goals that contribute toward a bigger goal. Think about your larger goals for the month or year; how can you implement just one daily habit that will inch you closer to that bigger goal? Drinking more water, reading more books, saving money for an upcoming trip, spending more time with friends and family are all things that can be broken down into smaller, daily habits to help you achieve the bigger goal.

GET STARTED TODAY

The reason so many people choose to go after new goals and implement new habits on January 1st is due to the collective willpower and mentality of a new year; talk about strong motivators for getting started! But I’ll let you in on a secret: you can create a similar level of magic in your own life by associating your new habits with even smaller changes. The start of a new month (even if it’s not January), the rearrangement of your bedroom, the redesigned setup of your desk are just a few simple ways to kickstart your habit change and associate your new routines with other positive changes in your life.

Don’t wait for a brand new year to start changing your life and business through the power of habits; make it happen today, or if needed, by tying these shifts to a physical change that will help reframe your mindset. Clarify your specific goals, identify the habits that can help get you there, and tweak the trigger-routine-reward cycle to fit your desires and lifestyle. 🌸

Jenna Murillo is the Product + Workspace Designer behind Workspacery, your online resource for designing a beautiful, functional workspace at home.



FIVE PRACTICES TO ADOPT A

Growth Mindset

by **Peggy Dean**

WWW.THEPIGEONLETTERS.COM / @THEPIGEONLETTERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURYN KAY PHOTOGRAPHY

Having a growth mindset in any career is not just the best way to think and perform—it's the *only* way to think and perform. It's especially crucial as entrepreneurs in any stage, be it in the beginning when everything seems too big and scary, to peaks when the top of the world feels accessible. Because what happens when the top of our world is reached? It's only natural to feel like we might plummet after a big success. Why? Fear! Let's use fear to our benefit. We can't always control what happens, but we can control how we react to it. Developing not only the best business practices, but also the best mindsets for ourselves will do wonders in our personal and professional development. Here are five thought patterns you must adopt to exercise growth in your creative mind.

REMEMBER WHY YOU STARTED. Passion is everything. It's the burning drive that gets us up in the morning and fulfills every inch of our being throughout the day. Of course, we can't just wake up one day, quit our day job, and automatically succeed overnight. What we can do, however, is understand that our dream, fueled with passion, is a relationship that we must take great care of, tending to it and challenging it along the way. Commitment takes hard work and there will be a time or 400 that it feels like it's time to throw in the towel.

Listen, if you're looking for a reason to quit, you'll find it. You're going to think I'm crazy for saying this, but when those times come up, think of them as good signs. You're experiencing growing pains. You're getting the opportunity to challenge yourself and problem solve and come out on the other side even stronger. When things get tough, even when they feel impossible, revisit your *why*. You love this stuff. You'd eat, sleep and breathe this stuff if you could.

There are a handful of approaches to every situation, so don't let your passion and drive get buried. It's through these challenges that we find our strength.

CELEBRATE SUCCESSES, NO MATTER HOW SMALL. This is a difficult one for people who wear a lot of hats. Taking a moment to realize that we hit a goal and allowing ourselves to relish in that moment will give us the satisfaction that we need to continue. I mention celebrating success no matter how small because once we succeed in something and want to keep moving forward to the next best thing, we forget that at one point earlier in our journey, this little success was once a dream goal. It was once something huge to us and we work our butts off to get there. As we grow, we often forget how far we've come. So sit back, reflect on all of that kickass work you did to get there, and celebrate.

PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES. Albert Einstein once said, "*Nothing happens until something moves.*" We can learn, research, practice, perfect, and prepare, but all of that is pointless without action. This idea will break the mold of one's comfort zone, forcing them out into the unknown. Let me tell you something I've experienced and still experience: We will get rejected! It doesn't need to be a fear because it's a fact!

Here's where we can use the fear of rejection and failure to our benefit. If we get a "No," nothing changes. You already have a "no" because you haven't tried. On the flip side, you can use rejection as a learning experience. Review how you approached what you wanted, note the response you got, and do it better next time. The best thing that can happen are the times you get a "Yes," knowing you worked hard to get it. Yay, you!

WELCOME COMPETITION. Oh boy, does competition and comparison hit home or what? There's not a single being out there that hasn't felt threatened by competition. Let's flip this mindset. Some of your stiffest competitors can become your strongest allies if you play your cards right. When you feel yourself comparing what you do to others, make this your new mantra: *Nobody can do what I do in the unique way that I do it.* What you do is different. How you approach things is different. What you provide is different. No matter how similar, your personal touch matters to people, and there is room for all of us.

When somebody wants something, they begin to look into it, finding many sources and leaving them with many choices. Chances are, they'll explore a few of their options. This works to your benefit! Additionally, when someone dives into your industry with great interest, they may benefit a ton from another business and want to further their own experience by trying something new and different. That's when they land on you. This also works in the opposite direction. Someone may soak up what you're providing, whether it be a service or if they're purchasing your product. After that, they may move over to your competitor for even more. When we keep this in mind, we remember that there's plenty to go around and the most important idea to adopt: *When you win, I win. And when I win, you win.* Who knows, you may even team up with them for a collaboration one day!

ALWAYS CONTINUE TO LEARN. Don't pretend to have all the answers or that every circumstance is appropriate to "fake it 'til you make it." There's a time and a place to elude confidence, but there's also something commendable about human beings that can admit that they don't know everything. If something feels extremely out of reach, be honest with yourself about it. When you give yourself the truth, you give yourself opportunity to learn more and grow further. Resources are more accessible now than ever before. We learn something new every day, so imagine what we'd learn if we actively pursued learning every day. 🌀

Peggy Dean is a best-selling author and educator with a focus on modern calligraphy, watercolor and gouache painting, and line drawing.

Generating Affiliate Income



by **Jessica Stansberry**
WWW.JESSICASTANSBERRY.COM / @JESSCUHSTANSBERRY



I LOVE reading income reports from other business owners and blogger because there's SO MUCH to learn from them that we can apply to our own businesses.

It can be such a weird thing to go on the Internet and talk about how much money you make. But the people who publish these income reports aren't bragging. They're giving you a glimpse inside a window to their success, and if you don't look and see what you can learn from them, you're absolutely missing out on an amazing opportunity to get some "free" business advice.

Something I want you to notice from so many of the income reports that are put out on the internet is the line item that reads, "affiliate income".

It doesn't matter if it's an entrepreneur who sells courses, someone who blogs about fashion or a YouTuber - that line item shows up in almost all of these magical learning reports.

Sometimes it's a massive amount. Sometimes it's a small amount. Sometimes it's the ONLY piece of income. But it's almost always there.

See, affiliate income is really the *closest* you'll ever get to passive income. I mean, it's still not truly *passive*, there's still *work* to be done to get people to #buythings. But it's probably a 2 on the scale of 1-10 of effort, so it's a pretty good option.

I want to let you in on a little secret though: you have to have an audience to be able to sell any products, especially to be trusted to sell other people's products. But the magic happens because you can be building an audience at the same time you're building affiliate income because affiliate income and audience building both come down to one thing...

CONTENT CREATION. Blogging, YouTubing, Podcasting - content creation - is something I believe in so heavily and one of the *big* reasons is that it works for you when you're not working.

See, you write blog posts and they live *forever*.

Someone could be searching for what that blog post was about two years after you wrote it, find it, love it and click away. Or, someone could find your podcast and then want to binge and listen to old episodes and click on links, etc.

Having regular, consistent, well-formatted content is an amazing plan because it's evergreen and with that you can also promote things you believe in in a way that allows you to make commission on it.

So, let's step out of the box for a minute and see how you can use this in your own business:

Let's say you're a financial planner and a question you get a lot is, "How do I save money each month?" You like to use a specific app that rounds every dollar spent up and puts that in an account automatically (I feel like this is a real thing but maybe I'm making it up, ha). Write your blog post - be helpful, be useful, gain the trust of the reader and *help* them but also link to that app and tell them why you love it. This will lead to clicks on the app through your affiliate link (you have to sign up with most companies to have an affiliate link specific to you) and money in your account.

Now, that's just *one* example but insert your own expertise, your own niche and your own products/ programs you like.

Also, a quick note (actually 2 notes) about this: The commission is generally small (3-25%) and on

something that has a small price tag, it can be cents that you earn for every purchase or sign up. You need traffic going to the content where you've got affiliate links, and lots of it, to be able to capitalize on it in its best form.

An example: You earn \$2 for every sale of something you're promoting and you create a post promoting that thing that gets 10,000 views per month and about 3% of the views convert to a sale of the thing. That means, that every.single.month you're making \$600/month from one blog post.

Another example of how you can use this in your business is by creating an Amazon Influencer page; this works basically the same as just being an Amazon affiliate BUT it lets you add things really easily - AND - you can link to the page within email for email marketing (you can't legally link to Amazon affiliate products in emails otherwise). So this is my current Amazon Influencer Page: www.amazon.com/shop/jessicastansberry, and it's where I can link the camera equipment I use and other things I want to share with my audience.

So if you have a list of products that you're constantly recommending - books, equipment, clothes, food, vitamins, whatever - you can share it with your audience and have them shop for it all while making money just because someone shopped.

We live in a weird world right now (and I'm saying "weird" in the best sense of the word) because it's totally normal for someone you follow on Instagram to be the reason you buy a \$89 scarf or for that YouTuber you watch to link their camera gear in their video knowing that someone will wonder and click the links.

“There are so many ways to incorporate affiliates into your current content, and it's something not nearly enough people are doing. Or if they're doing it, they don't really understand the full power.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOCIAL SQUARES, HEADSHOT BY KIM FRIESLAND

“The day of influencer marketing is here, and it’s the people who are jumping in with both feet and embracing it that are able to succeed and make passive income a real possibility.”



Let me help you get started on this affiliate income journey.

1. ESTABLISH AFFILIATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMPANIES YOU ALREADY BELIEVE IN AND LOVE AND MAKE SENSE TO LINK TO FOR YOUR SPECIFIC INDUSTRY AND AUDIENCE.

A fashion blogger might establish a relationship with Nordstrom to promote their clothes. Someone who’s selling a course about Pinterest marketing might want to share something like Tailwind (a Pinterest scheduling tool) with their audience so they should approach them as a sponsor.

- **Pro Tip #1:** Most stores and companies offer affiliate programs so if you want to apply, go to their website and look for a link. If it’s available, it’s generally towards the bottom or footer of their site. Also, there are networks that have already-established relationships with companies that you can apply to and be an affiliate through. An example here is Reward Style, they help fashion and home decor bloggers be able to be affiliates for thousands of companies by only “applying” through them. *Note: Some companies DO require a certain following or website traffic.*
- **Pro Tip #2:** Some affiliate programs offer recurring revenue if their service is recurring. For example: If you are referring someone to a subscription-based service like those monthly boxes filled with food and recipes (or anything that has a monthly subscription), their affiliate program might offer a recurring fee for each month that the person you referred is using and paying for the service. These types of affiliate relationships are gold because you are able to count on the income coming in from these more easily because it is fairly similar each month.

2. ESTABLISH AN AUDIENCE WHO CARES ABOUT WHAT YOU RECOMMEND.

It’s great to have affiliate relationships with companies and brands that you love and want to share, but if you don’t have anyone to share them with, you’re going to be disappointed with the income that’s generated. So take your time and build an audience through content creation that actually cares about what you have to say and recommend - let them see you as a resource.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOCIAL SQUARES
HEADSHOT BY KIM FRIESLAND



Let’s chat about a few different ways someone could incorporate affiliate income:

FASHION BLOGGERS sharing clothes on Instagram/their blog and their followers purchasing through their links.

BUSINESS COACHES sharing links to their favorite programs/services when writing tutorials so their audience has the information but also purchases the product through their link.

A COURSE CREATOR who sells their course and then links off to other products, programs or services to help the student continue learning while still making an affiliate commission.

A YOUTUBER who reviews toys linking off to the toys they’re talking about on their video.

PHYSICAL BRICK-AND-MORTAR LOCATIONS establishing relationships with each other to refer customers back and forth.

REAL ESTATE AGENTS who refer their clients to services that cater to new home owners (insurance, furniture stores, housekeeping services) and makes a kick-back from that referral.

I think we can get stuck thinking that our business can’t do certain things because it’s a certain type of business or because it’s not exactly the type of business you’re seeing other people have success in this area with, but hopefully those examples above showed you the possibilities.

3. COME UP WITH A PLAN FOR YOUR AFFILIATE MARKETING EFFORTS.

Don’t just leave your income to chance. Plan it out, even when part of the income is coming from affiliate relationships. Instead of just linking to things randomly, have an actual strategy for sharing these products and services with your audience.

- **Pro Tip:** Think outside of the box. Example 1: Have a podcast or YouTube channel? Create an ad for one of your favorite affiliates and use them as a “sponsor” for your content even though they’re not technically paying you for the ad space. Your audience will buy through your links, and then you’ll make money from that ad space. Example 2: You are a mommy blogger and you know that Halloween is coming up. Instead of just creating a post about how to have or decorate for a Halloween party, specifically and strategically buy all of the decor from Target and make it almost like a Target sponsored post where you’re linking back, using your affiliate link to all of the products you used.

I encourage you, regardless of what business you’re in or what niche you speak to, to look deeper into affiliate marketing in a way that makes sense for you and your audience.

The day of influencer marketing is here, and it’s the people who are jumping in with both feet and embracing it that are able to succeed and make passive income a real possibility. 🍷

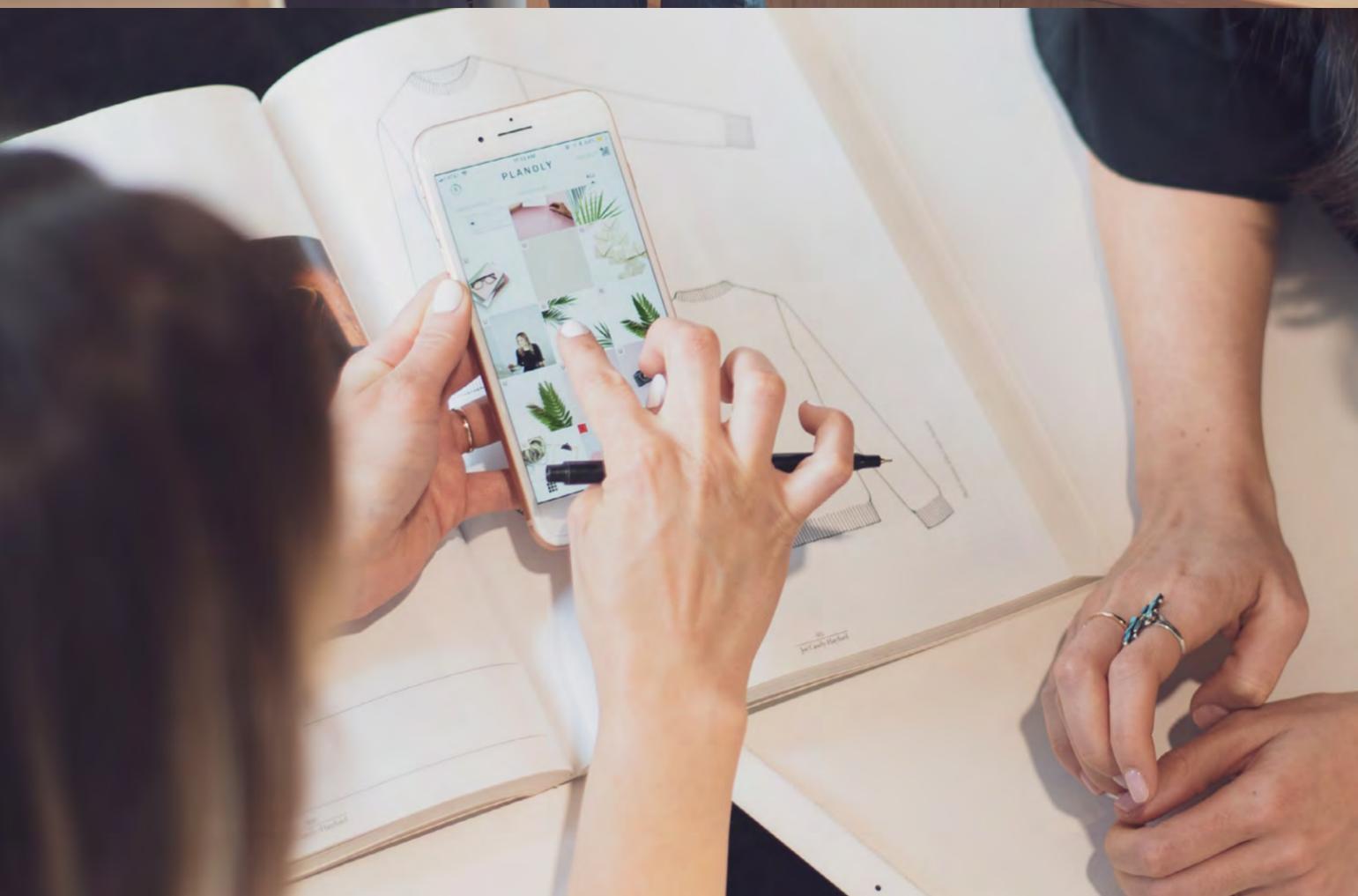
Jessica Stansberry helps entrepreneurs grow bigger, better, more visible businesses using marketing tactics that actually work.



HOW REFINING YOUR INSTAGRAM PRESENCE CAN
ATTRACT YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS AND

Cultivate Community

PHOTOS BY LUCAS JENSEN



by **Delaney Spaid**

WWW.DELANEYSPAI.COM / [@DELANEYSPAI](https://www.instagram.com/DELANEYSPAI)

We've all heard the term, "digital native." Well, that's me. It all started with my family's dial up back in the 90's where all you could do is play Barbie computer games and maybe use AOL if it connected in time. There are memories of keeping in touch with my friends via Instant-Messenger and writing random blogs on the sites Xanga and Myspace. Then, there was getting my first flip phone and texting friends (even though texting was way more expensive to communicate). As the years progressed, a little website called Facebook made its way into the world. It was the *it* thing. At that time we shared albums of our high school dances and family vacations - even random blurry photos - they all made an appearance. Then Instagram got on my radar. It was 2011, and at that time I knew nothing about it. Since then, it has evolved into a social media platform that I've fallen in love with and chosen to run my business around.

We can all agree technology has advanced like crazy over the years - including the rise and evolution of social media channels. We all know social media has made connecting more accessible than ever (like creeping on people you went to high school with). With that, it's also changed the marketing landscape. It's given businesses a chance to communicate *directly* to their target markets (more on that below).

The love of understanding social media is what helped turn my passion into a business as a Social Media Strategist. I'm have a college degree in Apparel Merchandising and Design as well as a business minor. There was a stint as a retail manager at a stationery shop in my career path that allowed me to wear many hats. One of my favorite tasks there was developing our

social media presence. That gave me the experience of doing everything from capturing and editing photos to posting and engaging with followers. It was evident that social media was the best way to connect with potential clients in a high impact way. Since then, I've been developing social media strategy and creating content for creative entrepreneurs and businesses in a variety of industries - everything from real estate and event venues to photographers.

The focus now is with Instagram as the key social media channel to invest in both personally and professionally. I truly believe Instagram is here to stay as a business marketing tool and personal communication challenge.

In talking with my clients, it was evident they were feeling overwhelmed in trying to keep up with Instagram. They knew that they *should* be on social media - but beyond sharing some photos and short captions, there wasn't much strategy to their *why*. That opened the door to provide a service demonstrating that social media and digital marketing can be fun, attainable and way less intimidating.

It can feel like there are new features and "rules" to the app every month (how many times to post, where to paste hashtags, the best way to use stories, etc.) But, it's come a LONG way from the sepia toned vintage filters. To put it into perspective, influencer content didn't exist in 2011. Heck, blogs were dominated by hipsters in Brooklyn at that point. Now with over one billion users on the app, there's got to be a consistency and allure to your Instagram in order to stand out and attract your target market.

Delaney Spaid is a Social Media Strategist based in Des Moines, Iowa.

These are my top five tips to refine your own Instagram presence in order to cultivate an active and engaged community.

1 **Develop and share beautiful imagery that speaks to your brand and attracts your ideal clients.** Remember the old saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words?" Keep that in mind! Those visuals are speaking more for your brand than you may know. Invest in a professional photographer to capture effortless, on-brand imagery or see what modern stock photo options could support the look of your grid.

2 **Write thoughtful captions and tell your brand stories with heart.** Words matter. What you say - whether that's in captions, on IGTV, through a stories series, or on live - should capture the audience just as much as the photos posted. It matters because the Instagram algorithm notices increased activity on your account - think "likes", direct messages, comments, and more. This is the currency to building an engaged brand.

3 **Engage your followers like they're your BFFs.** Cultivating community can, in turn, help you grow your business. Interacting with those who leave comments or send messages is like shaking hands at a networking event. You wouldn't turn around and run there, right?



4 **Hashtags can increase your reach and assist in connecting with your target market.** Think of hashtags like mini-file folders. They store posts and photos that relate to the topics of interest. Hashtags have the ability to gather like-minded people in one area. Spend time connecting with others in those communities and you'd be surprised what relationships you can build.

5 **Show up with strategy and plan it out.** Developing an editorial calendar helps in mapping out your overall content messaging and timing so you don't have to be pressed for time. Having that strategy now eliminates stress and allows you to enjoy creative freedom. My personal favorite content planning app is Planoly.

All of this works together in showcasing and building your brand on Instagram. I've seen it work firsthand for myself and my clients. In addition to traditional advertising like television and radio ads, Instagram is quickly becoming a pillar of every business' marketing toolkit. With a strategy, owning your unique style, and dedication to connecting with your followers, you'll be able to connect with your audience faster than Instagram can crank out another update. 🌸

Creating a Value Mindset



by **Jana Bishop**

WWW.JANABISHOP.COM / @THEJANABISHOP



Have you ever wondered why some photographers seem to feel at home behind the lens...finding success at EVERY corner? While others sit on the sidelines eating hot Cheetos and just wishing they could finally make their big break? Or maybe that's just me?

There I go, airing my dirty laundry again.

But really. We have all done it at some point or another. We thumb through magazines, we scroll through Instagram, and it happens. Humph...that sky is blown out. Their expression is weird. That edit is too dark. Or my favorite: we attribute their success to the styled shoots they have done. I mean really... who has clients that look like models in designer clothes on a regular basis? And there we are; we close the magazine or log off of social media and we subconsciously think a few negative thoughts about our own life or work. Then, we walk right into an eight hour Netflix binge while we edit last week's boring photo session.

And somewhere in the midst of it all, we are attracting even more dead-end shoots and underpaying clients. Stuck in a cycle. Essentially, creating a business that could very well create a monster out of us.

I can remember being in the 5th grade, and one of our big projects for the semester was writing a report on our dream job. We had to decide what we wanted to be when we grew up, including how much we wanted to make, where we wanted to work and how much time we would have to spend in school to get there. It was like a huge gift was handed to me that day, and the tag on it said: "Your Future Self". I was giddy with possibility, frantically searching for the careers that made the most money with the least amount of education. I wanted to start that career right away. And then everything changed. I asked the boy sitting next to me what he wanted to be, and in the most casual, matter of fact voice he said, "A shoe salesman".

A what??? That wasn't on the list of options...

Turns out his Dad owned a local shoe store and made waaaaay more money than any of the options I had scribbled on my notebook that day. I can vividly remember the temptation I felt to change my dream job to a shoe salesman right away. I was sold. His Dad wasn't a surgeon or lawyer; he was an ordinary guy running a successful business. But I couldn't make it add up in my mind. How does that work? I thought education made the money; the degree brings in the dollars. But my friend's Dad had somehow created a world where his job paid him just as much if not more than those other fancy opportunities.

How does that happen? What is the formula? Do you know what I mean? It used to be as simple as: get this degree and earn this much money. Get this job and your income cap is this much. But business owners have flipped that idea on its head. And guess what? Creatives, artists, and dreamers are doing the same thing!

Now, here's the problem. How do you make the equation add up when there isn't one? How do you reach for the stars when you can't even see them? As creative

business owners, we hear of other people's success and we think, "How?" How do they make that much money? Especially when there really isn't a set salary for independent artists.

Wanna know the magic formula? The set of rules that will work every. single. time?

Magic Formula = Value Mindset

I know what you are thinking. Hold up, Jana. This is crazy talk. It's okay to think that. I totally get it. I want to invite you to go on a little journey with me and decide for yourself...

Here's something I think most of us creatives can agree on: it stinks to work on something that does not bring you joy. Am I at least a little bit right in saying that? Some of my worst days in business were spent editing a shoot that bored me to tears or times when I agreed on a low fee, even though I knew my work deserved a higher compensation. Without even trying, I was creating the same outcome over and over again. I had this thought that the market was too saturated. That my work wasn't good enough, my camera was too old. I let this ridiculous list of things pile up as proof that I didn't deserve my dream client, job or income.

I was stuck in a dead-end mindset. I wasn't offering the best of my talents to the best-paying people. I began to actually believe that I would be a run of the mill photographer forever. Attracting church ladies that wanted me to photograph their family of sixteen for a hundred bucks. Yuck!

Without even knowing it, I tuned into a zombie creative. And zombie creatives don't have a value mindset. They go through the motions but rarely have any heart, soul or imagination.

Sound familiar?

Now, let's circle back to my friend's dad for a second. He taught me an important lesson that my 5th grade self never forgot: success can come in any form.

You can create your dream job, your dream income, your dream clients.

It all starts with you. It starts with your mindset.

Close your eyes for a moment and just dream with me. What does your ideal photoshoot look like? Who's there? Is it a family? Is it on the beach? Or maybe you are in a studio working with fashion designers.

Tell me with as much detail as possible about what that shoot, that day looks like in your mind's eye. Are you lethargic and bored or are you energized and vibrant? Are you creating gorgeous images that make people stop and comment on your incredible work? Are they saying things like..."She just has an eye for it." "She is the best in the industry." "You have GOT to book her!"

Which day sounds better? The one where you are mindlessly scrolling and looking at other people's success or the one where you ARE the success.

See, everything you need to make that dream job or dream day a reality is already inside of you! You have just been stuck in zombie mode for way too long.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANA BISHOP

Let's awaken that dream day with these simple steps. Let's create a value mindset right now!

FIRST STEP: Be genuinely honest and acknowledge what you do not want to do anymore. For me, this happened when I photographed an entire wedding while going through a miscarriage. I'll never forget that day. It made me realize that I needed to create a job that allowed me to be gentle with myself, my body. I was tired of the *go, go, go* mentality. I wanted the freedom to work when I wanted to without deadlines and stress. Now this may be different for you. You may be tired of working from home and crave the excitement of traveling the world. Write it down. Tell me all about it.

SECOND STEP: Write down what excites you. What would be your dream gig? What does the shoot look like? Give me as much detail as possible.

THIRD STEP: Tell me ALL the value you are bringing to this shoot. Is your energy high? Are you laughing and enjoying the easy-going atmosphere? Did they hire you because you are an expert on lighting? Or maybe you have this keen knack for making anyone feel like a supermodel. Quantify your value into 5 phrases and write those down. For instance: I am excellent at...

FOURTH STEP: How much are you getting paid? Let's pretend whatever you write down is what you will make. Are you barely making enough for your time or are you being compensated generously? Write that number down.

FIFTH STEP: Combine all of this into a set of affirmations that you can see every day. Here's a sample script for you.

I love that I get to travel the world with my family, photographing luxury resorts. I am compensated generously for my time and I add so much value with my expert eye for design and my keen use of natural light. Everyone who hires me says I'm a joy to work with and they eagerly recommend me to their colleagues. I am living my dream!

Now it's your turn:

I LOVE THAT I GET TO _____

I AM COMPENSATED GENEROUSLY FOR MY

TIME AND I ADD VALUE WITH MY

AND MY _____

EVERYONE WHO HIRES ME SAYS I'M

_____ AND

THEY EAGERLY RECOMMEND ME TO THEIR

COLLEAGUES. I AM LIVING MY DREAM!

Now, how do you feel? Probably a little bit or even a LOT better about the future of your business. See?! It all starts with your mindset! From here, I want you to take some inspired action. For instance, one of my BIG goals is to go on CreativeLive and teach photographers all over the world how to create and incorporate styled stock images into their photo packages. Can you imagine the demand you would have if you offered this to your clients?! Sounds awesome, right? But in order for them to know I exist, I have to take an action step. I need to reach out to CreativeLive and let them know I want to do this. Scary? Ummm, heck yes. But totally worth it! So, who can you reach out to this week to start taking steps towards your dream gig? Or what courses can you buy that will help increase your expertise in an area?

It all starts with you. And you know what? I know without a shadow of a doubt that you can and will make it happen. I'm in your corner, always cheering you on!!! 

Jana Bishop provides a collection of resources for Creative Entrepreneurs, allowing them to create the brand of their dreams with confidence and excitement!



Q&A

by **Brooke Saxon-Spencer**
with **Jaclyn Johnson**

@JACLYNRJOHNSON / @WORKPARTY



We asked Jaclyn Johnson, the founder and CEO of Create & Cultivate, author of the book *WorkParty*, and host of the *WorkParty* podcast the big questions that every female entrepreneur WANTS to ask, but is embarrassed to actually speak up and voice. Here she gives us her abbreviated thoughts--we don't want to spoil her book!

Q: How do I start?

Honestly—and I think many business owners will tell you this—you just have to start. You will never be 100% prepared, and a lot of what you need to know you'll learn along the way. But you can't build a business until you start one, and as long as you're smart and willing to roll up your sleeves and learn all you can, you'll find a way to make it work.

Q: What are the best ways to cultivate my business?

Get out there and meet people. Remember their names. Keep in touch. You never know who could help your business in the future, whether it's a florist for your first event or an attorney you can hire to review a contract.

Q: With #allthethings to work on, what would you recommend making a priority?

When you have a million things going on, it's important to remember your company's mission. Why did you build your business? What tasks are going to help you get closer to your goals? If you're going to be an entrepreneur, you've got to learn how to juggle a bunch of tasks, but prioritize the ones that really align with your purpose.

Q: How do I get help?

Find a community within your city or industry and connect with as many people as you can (I built Create & Cultivate for this very reason!). You never know who might know the perfect writer or graphic designer for your project.

Q: How do I make money?

First of all, make sure your business is filling a need in the market (what I call "whitespace"). Next, build a solid business plan—treat your business as a business from day 1. And when it comes time to grow your team, hire the right employees—people who believe in your mission and want the best for the company.

Q: What if it bombs?

Failure is a part of entrepreneurship. If you haven't failed, you probably didn't push hard enough. Learn from it, apply that knowledge, and move on.

Q: Let's be real, you have connected with A LOT of influential women (making many of us very jealous). What advice do you have for connecting with the "right" people to grow your biz and get noticed?

Reach out. Send the cold email. When I moved to LA, I knew absolutely no one, and I had to really put myself out there. I just kept doing that, over and over, through my agency and then while building Create & Cultivate. The worst someone can do is say no—but the best they can do is say yes to building a connection that grows into a long-lasting working relationship.

Q: In what ways did you cultivate your business?

When I was first starting out (after I had lost my full-time job), I reached out to several people in my network to let them know I was looking for work. When the opportunities started rolling in, I worked extremely hard to put my best work out there, and then also continued to build trusting relationships with those clients and companies. I always say that if you're a pleasure to work with, people will continue to want to work with you, and that's remained true throughout my career.

Q: What are your favorite business tools?

A portable charger – I'm often running around events for upwards of 12 hours, so this is a must.
Dropbox / Google Drive — We run our entire business via Dropbox and Google Drive because it's accessible anywhere.

Q: What has been your most rewarding risk?

There were a few times when I first started my marketing agency where I thought I might have made a huge mistake. But as it turns out, building that business, which led to the creation of Create & Cultivate, was the most rewarding thing I ever could have done for myself.

*Read more about Jaclyn and her journey in her book *WorkParty* where she goes in depth on many of the tough questions all female entrepreneurs are asking.*

HEADSHOT BY JESSICA BORDNER PHOTOGRAPHY



by **Lara Casey**

WWW.LARACASEY.COM / [@LARACASEY](https://www.instagram.com/LARACASEY)

It's Okay to Grow Slow

Every day, you and I walk around with labels on our hearts revealing what's inside.

They can be straightforward: Wife. Mom. Daughter. Friend.

They can be hopeful: Believer. Artist. Founder.

And they can be damaging: Too Much. Not Enough. Failure.

There's one label though that goes below the surface, and can change the trajectory of your life: Cultivator. In the traditional sense, a cultivator loosens the soil for crops to grow. To us, that means uncovering what matters most to you and growing it right where you are. You aren't doing it perfectly, but instead making one seemingly small intentional decision after another.

Here are a few other things a cultivator does:

She uncovers her own unique goal and path. Instead of looking to other people's goals or social media feeds to define her own, she puts in the hard work of uncovering a path that fires her up.

“She sets out on a purposeful path by uncovering cultivated goals. She's tired of wandering aimlessly, with no goal, and she embraces her path with excitement and enthusiasm.”

She embraces little by little progress. She doesn't believe in quick fixes or overnight results, and she knows it's okay to grow slow.

She gets her hands dirty and takes action. Waiting for perfection might sound like a good idea, but she knows it's worth it to dig in right now instead of waiting for the perfect timing or circumstances.

She examines where she is in order to leap to what's next. Instead of ignoring what isn't working, she takes the time to evaluate everything—both the good and the bad—to uncover the path forward.

She creates a long-term vision and gets after it. She refuses to keep going through the motions, doing the same things she's always done. Instead, she steps forward into a new path.

She sets out on a purposeful path by uncovering cultivated goals. She's tired of wandering aimlessly, with no goal, and she embraces her path with excitement and enthusiasm.

She finds joy in the journey instead of placing all her value in the finish line. She knows there is much to be learned in the in-between.

She doesn't just embrace imperfect progress; she celebrates it. She's tired of abandoning ship at the first bump in the road, and she knows that the best things in life grow slowly.

She believes in community. She shares her goals, encouraging others along the way, instead of trying to do it all alone.

She is you.

The words we use to define ourselves have the ability to box us in, stopping us from moving forward—or they can free us, giving us momentum and permission to take hold of the life that is truly life. YOU are a cultivator, friend. Little by little you'll bloom, right where you are. 🌱

Lara Casey is an author, speaker and founder of Cultivate What Matters where you'll find her much acclaimed PowerSheets.

PHOTO BY SHAY COCHRANE, HEADSHOT BY GINA ZEIDLER

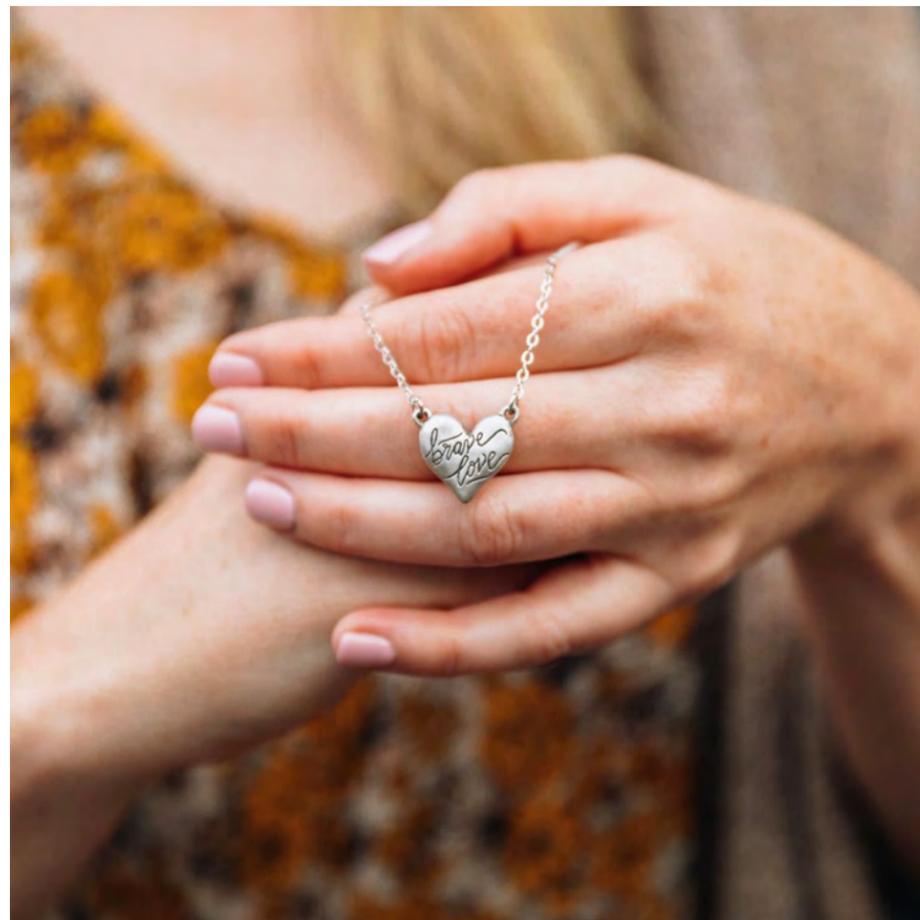
Brave Love

MAKING SPACE FOR YOU TO BE YOU



by Lisa Leonard

WWW.LISALEONARD.COM / @LISALEONARD



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LISA LEONARD DESIGNS

The first time I fired an employee was awful. My knees were shaking, my throat went dry and I had an awful feeling in the pit of my stomach—like I was going to throw up.

Firing this person felt wrong on every level. I genuinely liked this person. She was fun and talented. She was a long-time friend. She was amazing. We'd been working together for a while, but things just weren't working.

I tried being patient, I tried being kind, I tried being direct, I tried giving clear feedback. I tried changing my expectations. I felt like I tried everything—but in the end it wasn't working. She had to go. I had to let her go. ME. Me in all my people-pleasing-avoid-conflict-at-all-costs approach to the world.

It was hard.

She cried.

I felt awful.

I felt guilty.

I felt angry.

I felt like I was giving more than my fair share in our relationship.

And I was—but who's fault was that?

It was my fault.

I thought I could run my business being nice and kind and easy-going. I thought that was brave. I thought that was loving. Perhaps if I had been more upfront with this past employee, I wouldn't have had to fire her. Perhaps if I'd engaged in conflict we could have worked through misunderstandings and ended up on the same page.

I used to think Brave Love meant being strong, pushing down difficult emotions like sadness and anger and focusing on positivity. I thought I could avoid conflict by being nice and accommodating others. While there is nothing wrong with being strong, being positive, and being nice, if we use those things to mask pain or conflict, then they're hurting us instead of helping us.

I tried so hard, for so long, to be everything to everyone. I believed if I could make others happy, they would love me. I tried to make my husband happy, my kids, my coworkers, even the lady at the checkout line at the grocery store. I believed that somehow, I could control everyone's thoughts and emotions. I believed it was my job to make everyone okay.

It never worked, not even once. I thought I was being brave, but I was actually being inauthentic. I thought I was serving others, but I was actually trying to control them. I thought I could manage things, avoid conflict and create a beautiful life, but I ended up feeling desperately lonely, sad and empty.

I thought I could make things easier but at my lowest everything felt complicated and upside down. Something had to change. I had to change—not just with the way I ran the business, but the way I loved my husband and children, the way I spent my time, my thought life. It all had to change.

My journey to Brave Love {real Brave Love} has been up and down, forward and backward. I have had to unlearn wrong thinking, learn new ways of thinking, practice and then practice more. I have had to become comfortable with being uncomfortable. I have had to



“When I believe I am loved, I can stop worrying, stop trying so hard and start loving myself and others.”

engage in conflict when I wanted to smile and nod.

I have had to face my biggest fears—not knowing what the outcome would be. There have been desperate moments and amazing victories. And I still don't have it figured out—but I'm learning. I'm growing.

My journey to Brave Love meant digging deep down into my soul and taking an honest look at ME. What did I need and want? Why was I so unhappy? What false beliefs and unhealthy patterns were affecting me, my marriage, my children, my work relationships?

Brave Love is knowing I am loved just as I am. I don't have to do anything or be anything to be loved. The God of the Universe loves me right now.

When I believe I am loved, I can stop worrying, stop trying so hard and start loving myself and others.

Brave Love means I get to be completely me, and you get to be completely you.

Brave Love means we can be imperfect and messy.
Brave Love means we can forgive and move forward—or not, either is okay. We're still loved.

Brave Love is messy and scary, but friends, it leads to beauty and freedom!

How?

How do you get started on this Brave Love Journey?

It's going to take some time. It's likely going to get messier before it gets better. It might get darker before the sun shines again.

Deep breath.

Each step takes you closer to your truest, most beautiful self—the person you were made to be.

STEP ONE. MAKE SPACE. You'll need quiet, alone time, time to be with your thoughts and feelings. Time to simply *be* without rushing. Start by sitting on the couch for ten minutes each day with no distractions—just you quietly sitting on the couch. Set a timer if it helps.

STEP TWO. FOCUS ON TRUTH. Remind yourself moment by moment—*I am loved. Right now, just as I am, I am loved.* Repeat those words like a mantra over and over until they make their way into your heart.

STEP THREE. SAY WHAT YOU ACTUALLY THINK, NOT WHAT YOU THINK OTHERS WANT TO HEAR.

Even if your knees shake and your voice cracks, speak your truth. Each time you'll get stronger and braver.

STEP FOUR. FIND A COACH, FRIEND, COUNSELOR, THERAPIST AND/OR MENTOR.

You're going to need people to walk alongside you as you make this big life change. Don't be afraid to find people who will support you and help you grow.

STEP FIVE. PRACTICE AND PRACTICE. It's not a perfect journey—there will be steps and missteps and that's okay. Keep practicing.

Some people will love this new version of you and support your journey. Some people won't like this version of you—this honest, genuine, real and whole version of you. And that's okay. Those people are on their own journey. Let them go.

You are brave. You are loved.

Let's live out Brave Love in families, friendships and at work.

As you grow you'll see your personal relationships will flourish, your friendships will thrive your work relationships will be stronger. 🍀



In addition to being an author, Lisa Leonard is the founder of Lisa Leonard Designs, a jewelry company known for their handstamped designs.



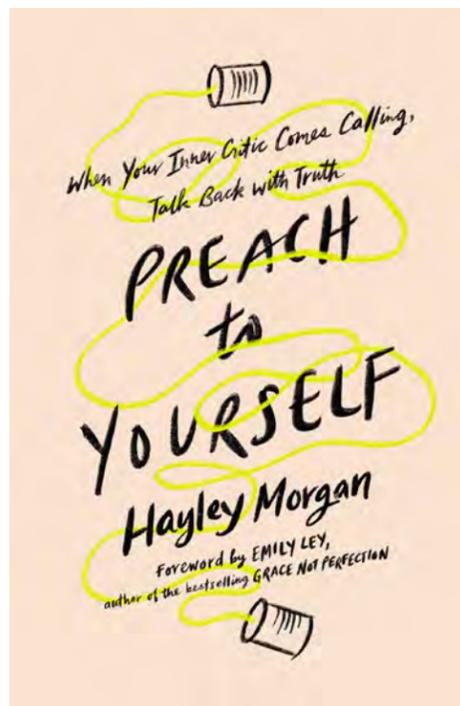
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEATHER GRAY PHOTOGRAPHY

Preach to Yourself



by **Hayley Morgan**

WWW.HAYLEYMORGAN.COM / @HAYLEY.E.MORGAN



It feels delicious, this sleep. It's all mine, with no distractions and no one who needs me at all. No emails to read, no to-dos on my list, and time crawls in that unhurried and blurry way. My mind is silent like I don't experience in the daylight hours. As I rub my eyes, those sleepy liminal moments feel slow and quiet and delightful for someone like me.

I have four little boys, multiple businesses, and a whole lot to do every day.

I know this delightful, soft-edged peace and quiet won't last long though. From the moment I tip over the side of the bed and plant my feet on the ground, my mind will be busy. It's loud, and it's often not a very companionable friend.

I kick the covers off, breaking out of my warm cocoon, and the cool air presses my mind to attention. I lie there, aware of the day now. As my mind wrestles to awareness, the thoughts are coming, slowly warming up like runners aiming to hit their stride. I know if I lie here too long, my mind will start racing and I'll never catch up with it the whole day long. This is how days get away from me.

I press my toes into the carpet and rise into the day. I have another chance to move through my day in a way I'd like to live—a way where the words running through my mind match up with what I big-picture-believe.

I make my way down the stairs, and I'm aware of stepping over the floorboards I know to be creaky. Those

“Taking the time to be careful with our minds is worth it for all the time we spend with ourselves.”

tiny noises have the power to awaken a whole host of sons I share my house with, my life with. I'm alone with my thoughts for now, and it's best that way. I power up the coffee maker, knowing that the jolt of this brew will invite a quickness into thoughts that isn't entirely helpful, but is welcomed.

When my thoughts get away from me, I start to feel a little bonkers. It's never clear to me right away why I'm feeling so badly. But, eventually it becomes very difficult to deny that something is very wrong.

THESE ARE SOME THINGS I LOOK FOR WHEN I'M FEELING OFF, BUT CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON WHAT IS GOING ON.

I feel bogged down. I feel the weight of the world, and it's heavy! I know I can't control everything, but I still feel like the weight of the world is all on my shoulders. If it's going to get done, it's going to have to be me. The details feel like they're piling up, and it's all so much. I'm not sure you'll ever get out from under how I'm feeling.

I feel unsure. I have no confidence what direction to move. I'm waffling. I'm on the fence. I don't know the next right move to make, and the only thing I'm sure of is that everything is going to fall apart if I get it wrong.

I feel like I'm going around in circles. I'm indecisive. I'm in a traffic roundabout and stuck there. I don't want to pick a direction and leave the roundabout, so instead of taking action, I just keep returning to the question at hand. I go around and around and around. I analyze everything in eighteen different ways. I think maybe if I give it enough time and think about it enough I won't possibly.

I feel like a phony. I know deep down that something isn't right. I don't feel like a whole person, but kind of like a halfway, watered-down version of myself. I'm pretty sure everyone else can tell that I'm a total fraud.

The thoughts that pepper my consciousness don't match up with what I thought I'd be offering up more than three decades into life. I have read all the books that tell you how to think positively. I have a deep and rooted faith.

I know all the right answers. But my heart still needs a steady reminding.

It isn't that I need to know more or know better. It turns out I need time to sit with the knowledge, the boldness to preach it to myself, and cultivate the discipline to exercise the truth every chance I get.

Of course, isn't that how life is? We never quite arrive in all our years on this old and broken earth. We are in constant need of grace, always cycling along the learning curve.

I sit at the table with my black coffee and sprouted grain toast with almond butter. This has become my routine, my regimen to start the day. And I know that like training myself to eat well, this believing what I know to be true is always going to be a muscle memory/faithfulness kind of thing. It's something that grows over time, and atrophies without care. It's a cultivated skill and practice.

I need to train in order to move what I know in my head to be true down to a deep-seated belief in my heart. This is the way I keep the kind, warm, productive thoughts going throughout the day, rather than the critical, cold, unhelpful ones.

I start my day with a basic, solid breakfast because I want to start my day in health. It hasn't always been this way. I'd be delighted with a steady stream of Diet Coke and Snickers, but I know that's not the kind of nutrition my body needs. But I'm training my body for health. And I can do that with my spirit too.

HERE'S THE THREE BEST, QUICK TIPS I CAN GIVE YOU TO DO THE SAME.

Identify the main lie you tell yourself like a broken record. What's going over and over and over again in your head on repeat? After conducting a survey of nearly 500 women, the three main lies I realized women tell themselves are some version of “I can't do this”, “I'm not enough”, or “Nothing is ever going to change”. Which one is it for you?

Call out the noise when you hear it. Because our brains are expert pattern makers, you have to stop the lie in its tracks. The more you tell it to yourself, the more you'll believe it and repeat it.

Blaze a new trail. Our brains have neurons that make fast and easy connections. When we cultivate a mind of light, we have to push back the dark. You have to blaze a new trail of light that will eventually result in a better, kinder mind.

Growing in warm kindness toward myself has changed everything. I can push back the noise when I practice carefulness with my thoughts. I hear more good news than bad news these days, and it all started with a cultivating the habit of telling myself how to think. The mornings are a little less harsh, moving from sweet dream world into the real world. The work comes a little easier without my self-critic showing up so quickly. The love flows more freely when I don't feel so assaulted by all the bad news.

Taking the time to be careful with our minds is worth it for all the time we spend with ourselves. Let's build kinder, warmer, friendlier environments for ourselves every day. ☺

Hayley Morgan is a writer, speaker, and entrepreneur who inspires women to create lives of more passion and less fuss.

BUILDING SPACE FOR

Content Creation

with Joy Cho & Sarah Sherman Samuel



Whether it's a home office, a studio or a cubicle, creating the right workspace environment is key for productivity and creativity. Joy Cho and Sarah Sherman Samuel are experts at this so we asked them for some insight on how to turn any space into one that will work for you. Using Joy's own recently designed spaces, they walked us through the process from inspiration to execution.

Q&A with Joy

Joy Cho is the founder and creative director of Oh Joy!. Oh Joy! has roots deep in blogging that have bloomed into a lifestyle brand that includes product lines and collaborations with brands such as Target, Erin Condren, PetCo, Chatbooks and more. Joy has authored three books full of her unapologetically bold and whimsical aesthetic with a focus on design, fashion, food and joyful moments from everyday life.

WWW.OHJOY.COM / @OHJOYCO

Q: What elements of the office design promotes creativity and group collaboration?

When you have a creative space, it's important to me for our office to promote collaboration and an open space helps to do that. My team can easily flow from one area to the next and interact with each other throughout the day as needed.

Q: Do you hold activities to help your staff with creativity?

We do a lot of inspiration trips to various museums, art studios, pop-up events, or even totally random things that just takes us outside our usual day to day like a Virtual Reality experience, cake decorating, flower arranging or a Cirque School class! These are often to celebrate birthdays but I always try to make sure we are doing them regularly in some way.

Q: What are important tips for other biz owners on creating consistently interesting content?

Being inspired by your surrounding and making sure you're getting out there and doing things that will help inspire that creativity. Also, look at your past work and consider how you can learn from that experience and make it better and stronger next time.

Q: What elements of your biz are your most proud of?

I'm proud of the team I have grown. It can be hard to trust people to be an extension of your brand and business, but I feel as though I have done a good job finding amazing people who help Oh Joy! grow everyday. I couldn't do all the things I do without them!

Q&A with Sarah

Sarah Sherman Samuel is a Los Angeles based Designer, Art Director, and Content Creator. A color and pattern expert, Sarah is known for effortlessly combining styles to create distinctive spaces, coveted products, and drool worthy images that have been shared and repinned by millions of Pinterest users.

WWW.SARASHERMANSAMUEL.COM / @SARASHERMANSAMUEL

Q: What elements of the design of Joy's space promote creativity and group collaboration?

The extra large inspiration boards serve as giant blank canvases where mood boards can be created, inspirational images, materials, objects can be pinned up and is ever changing. Each desk has their own but there is also an even larger one that can be worked on together which promotes group collaboration. Also having the large conference table right in the middle of the desks gives them a space to spread out and meet around the table, formally and informally to pass ideas etc.

Q: What tips can you share for designing a space to fuel creativity?

I think one important factor is to let the creative work have space to breath. Keeping things tidy and organized with plenty of negative space leaves room to create the new and lets the new work shine without competing for visual hierarchy.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TESSA NEUSTADT

Executive Office

Though historically in the midst of her team, Joy decided to create an “executive” office for herself in order to allow for phone calls and meetings. This office allows her to be accessible to her team, but provides for a little privacy and quiet. The space features a large painting made by Joy’s oldest daughter Ruby (along with a local artist), a sitting area, an Oh Joy! product display shelf, and other Oh Joy! products woven throughout the room including the floor tile. As a designer, Sarah married Joy’s personal aesthetic and the brand’s aesthetic into the space.

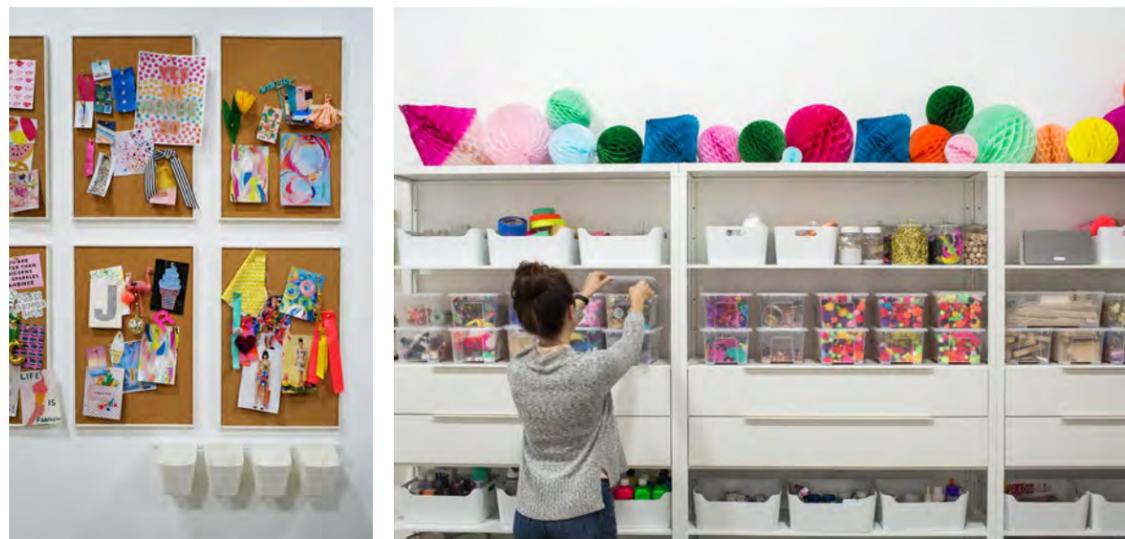


PHOTOGRAPHY BY TESSA NEUSTADT

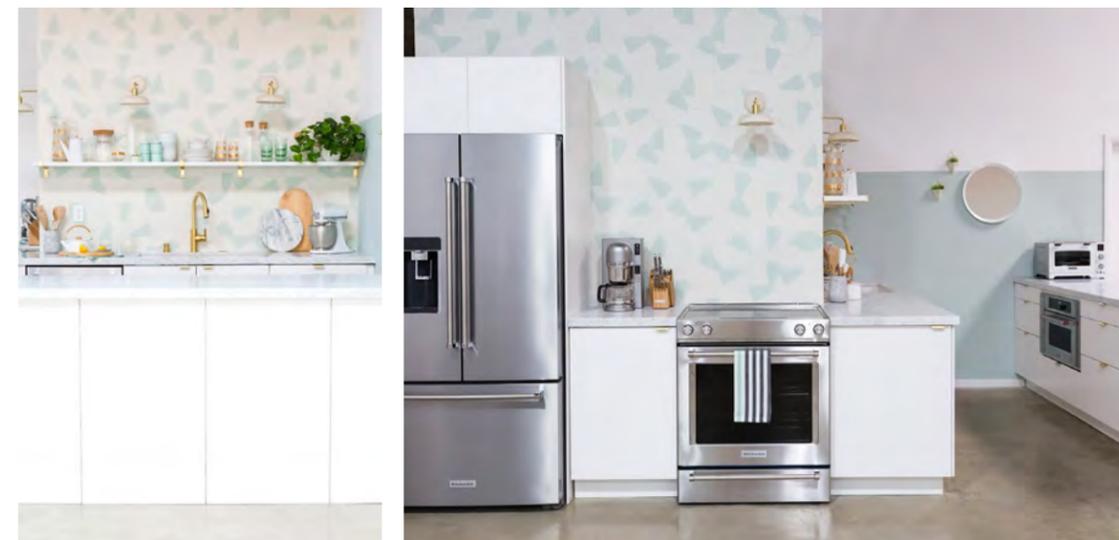


Craft Room

With the projects that the team is constantly designing and making, the studio required a designated craft room. This space boasts of open shelving allowing things to be seen and accessed easily while overhead and counter cabinets give options for things that need to be tucked away for occasional use. With the help of the IKEA Home Tour Squad, the craft room became a functional and beautiful space that everyone wants to work in.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CASEY BRODLEY FOR OH JOY!



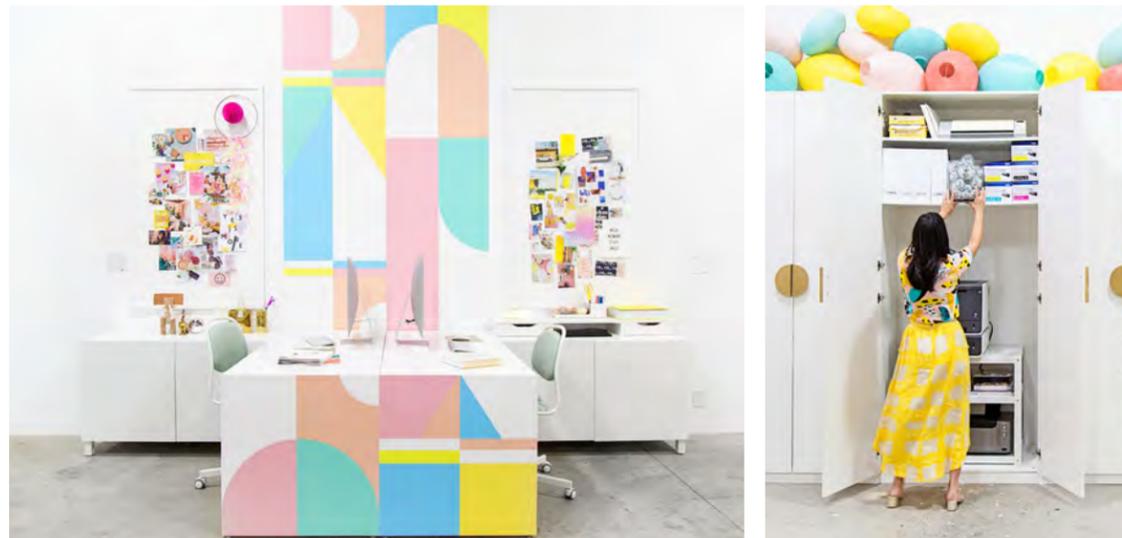
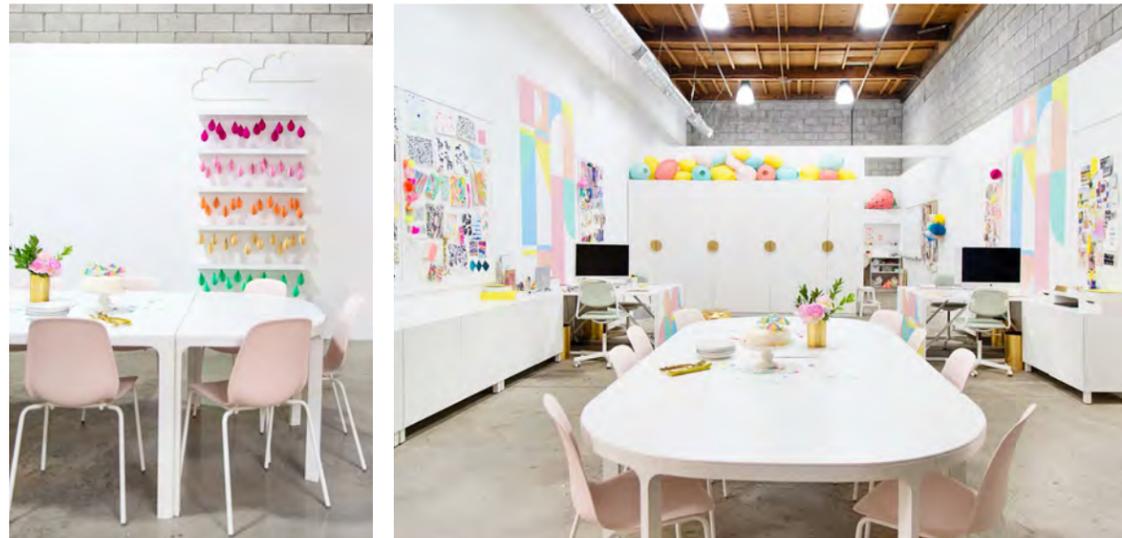
Kitchen

With a team of six people who eat lunch and make coffee/snacks everyday, a fully functioning kitchen was necessary. The kitchen also had to serve as a background to the Oh Joy! food stories. Primary shades of white, mint and gold give the kitchen a sleek, chic and fresh look while keeping it whimsical and in line with the Oh Joy! brand. Sarah and Joy also added the signature Oh Joy! color-blocked wall to one side of the kitchen to accentuate the green from the incorporated Oh Joy! tile.

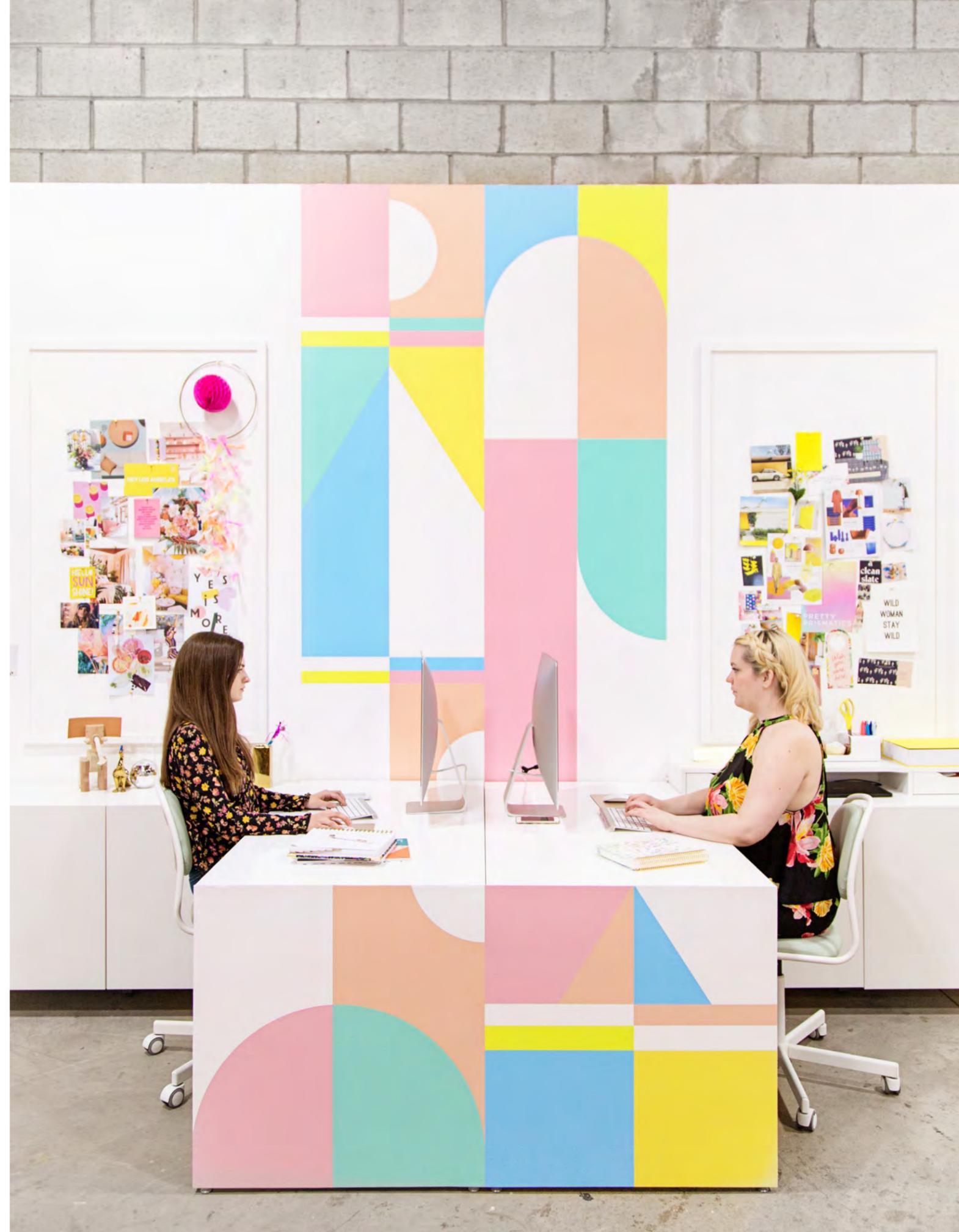
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MONICA WANG

Office

Joy really wanted the new space to feel very Oh Joy! but also have a lot of white space to stay crisp and fresh and to allow space for inspiration and ideas to grow daily. Joy and Sarah used pops of pastels, white, gold, and sprinkles of bright accent color throughout. The tall cabinets in the back are key in concealing all of their supplies yet keeping them accessible and organized. One of Joy's favorite parts of the whole transformation is the mural wall that Sarah incorporated as a fun way to add some pattern and color to the space. As the main hub where a lot of team pow-wows happen, a conference table and pale pink chairs were positioned to allow for community and collaboration.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF MINDELL



culti vate

@BELONG-MAG · #YOUBELONG

Cultivating Business



PHOTO BY TALIA NELSON PHOTOGRAPHY

**“The distance
between dreams
and reality is
action.”**

- UNKNOWN.



PHOTO BY OAKWOOD PHOTO + VIDEO

Floral Design

Julie James

OF JULIE JAMES DESIGN



WWW.JULIEJAMESDESIGN.COM / @JULIEJAMESDESIGN

Q: What do you do?

High-end floral designs for weddings and events.

Q: How long have you been at it?

8 years

Q: What's your "why"?

My creativity infusing pure joy into my clients is such a reward to me.

Q: How did you cultivate your business?

Word of mouth and networking have been instrumental in pollinating my business. Hard work, communication, and natural creativity have been huge in growth of the business. Being teachable has also helped me change areas of my business that needed refining.

Q: Your go-to biz tool you can't live without?

People. Julie James Design would never exist without the people at my side. Assistant designers, administrative assistants, creative mentors, local family to babysit, a husband who is willing to help deliver, and brides who trust me creatively. All of these people and more make my business run smoothly. I could not not live without them.

HEADSHOT BY ANNA LAERO, PHOTO BY CARYN AZURE PHOTOGRAPHY



Shop Owner

Alice Yoo

OF SKYLAR YOO



WWW.SKYLARYOO.COM / @SKYLAR.YOO

Q: What do you sell?

Clothes for bold women, mostly statement tees with empowering messages.

Q: How long have you been at it?

1 year

Q: What's your "why"?

We inspire and empower girls and women to be bold.

Q: How did you cultivate your business?

Active on Instagram, worked with digital marketing agency, formed relationships with Instagram influencers.

Q: What has been a positive turning point for you in your business?

Customers Instagramming their statement tees, showing their pride in our shirts.

Q: Your go-to biz tool you can't live without?

Shopify, Instagram, Mailchimp, Google Docs, Dropbox.

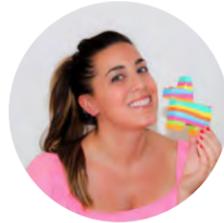
PHOTOS BY LAUREN NAYLOR



Shop Owner

Christine Lucas

OF LULA FLORA



WWW.LULAFLOREDESIGNS.COM / @LULAFLOREDESIGNS

Q: What do you sell?

Mini piñata party favors and decorations.

Q: How long have you been at it?

5 years

Q: What's your "why"?

I was planning my destination wedding in Mexico in 2012 and was set on having tiny donkey piñatas filled with candies at each seat as a place card. My wedding planner and I couldn't find anyone who sold them or who was willing to make them, so I literally took matters into my own hands and started designing them!

Q: How did you cultivate your business?

About 2 years after our wedding, my planner got in touch asking if I would be willing to make the little piñatas for another bride. I did a ton of research and discovered there still wasn't anyone making or selling them online. I opened an Etsy shop, listed a couple, and they started selling. I left my job that week and focused on designing templates and coming up with new themes full time!

Q: What has been a positive turning point for you in your business?

When I realized we were an actual business and that I needed help. A lot of it! We hired employees, an accountant, got incorporated... It was a big relief to pass off some responsibilities, and I felt like it was a major step going from "crafting" alone in my home office to producing hundreds of piñatas a month in our studio.

Q: Your go-to biz tool you can't live without?

A good pair of sharp scissors.



Online Courses

Courtney Foster-Donahue



WWW.COURTNEYFOSTERDONAHUE.COM / @COURTNEYFOSTERDONAHUE

Q: What do you sell?

Online courses for business owners

Q: How long have you been at it?

2.5 years

Q: What's your "why"?

I believe that when someone builds a business, they have a chance to better the world. That keeps me going! I believe *everyone* should be giving of their gifts to the world. In fact, I believe it is a social responsibility. My business is just that: an outlet for me to give of my gifts, share my skills, and leverage my experiences to help other businesses turn around and do the same.

Q: How did you cultivate your business?

I believe creation and cultivation - at their best - are responses to something. In my case, I had a lot of early, fast success with my other businesses, fellow business owners took notice, asked me what I was doing right, and so I began coaching and consulting. When I found that I was repeating myself a lot, whether I was talking to a dog trainer, a former client, or an Etsy maker, I knew i was on to something that could be systematized and turned into a module. So in that way, I went from consulting, then to coaching, then to courses. Now, with over 2,500 students in my communities, I've been able to reach even more people than I ever could one on one, and I'm able to guide them through the growth of their businesses.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEAR MISS MODERN



Q: What has been a positive turning point for you in your business?

When I found out I was pregnant. While the pregnancy was wanted, the morning sickness was not. I had hyperemesis gravidarum, an extreme form of morning sickness, and it forced me to go from working about 40 hours a week to just four. Even the computer screen could trigger the nausea (which was non-stop) so it caused me to majorly shift my priorities and focus even more on the tasks in my business that only I could do which were synonymous with the most import, money-making tasks. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise: Surprisingly, while I was working as minimally as possible, my business actually saw significant growth - far more than in past quarters.

Q: Your go-to biz tool you can't live without?

Ontraport. It's where we pretty much do everything.

Shop Owner

Vanessa Quigley

OF CHATBOOKS



WWW.CHATBOOKS.COM / @CHATBOOKS / @VANESSAQUIGLEY

Q: What do you sell?

Photo books and cards.

Q: How long have you been at it?

5 years

Q: What's your "why"?

To help people #LiveHappy!

Q: How did you cultivate your business?

In the beginning, our business grew solely through word of mouth with happy customers sharing the love. Now we acquire new customers through both organic and paid channels.

Q: What has been a positive turning point for you in your business?

I was very insecure in the beginning because I have no formal business training or experience. I felt very intimidated until I realized that there is no wrong way to be an entrepreneur and that my experiences as a singer and actress and mother had prepared me more than I know!

Q: Your go-to biz tool you can't live without?

Slack. I'm not always able to be in the office and Slack helps me stay connected to our team.



HEADSHOT BY JESSICA PETERSON, PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEATHER MILDENSTEIN

Building Belong



by Brooke Saxon-Spencer



PHOTOGRAPHY BY HAUTE STOCK • HEADSHOT BY FUEZA REIS



**“You belong.
That’s the
light in the
darkness.”**

I always joked that California was my “Africa”—you know, “Lord, I’ll go wherever you want—but please not Africa!” Here I am, sweating in the SoCal sun that never fades continuing to learn to trust that there’s always a greater plan being worked out that I just can’t see yet.

Following graduation from college, I spent the first 15 years of my professional career working for the family business (another “never say never” moment), a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center in the Chicago suburbs where I had grown up. Even though I received my college degree in Creative Writing, Photography and Graphic Design, I changed direction and grew into my role becoming a licensed nursing home administrator (sounds like fun, right?!).

Let’s take a hop, skip and a jump ahead to the day my husband received a phone call offering him a position at Azusa Pacific University. In case it isn’t obvious from “Pacific”, we weren’t talking Chicagoland anymore. We were talking California (aka my “Africa”).

This call led our family across the country to the land of deserts and palm trees and oceans and mountains and relentless sunshine and things you’d never find in the midwest—a place known to most of the natives as “the promised land” but to us, it was just sunny SoCal.

I felt a rough tug at the metaphorical rug beneath my feet as we left the only home I’d ever known. (College was as far as I’d gotten from my childhood home which was 17 miles away from the campus.) We left weekly family dinners with my parents, my brother and his family. We left friends—the forever friends that had been there in the early days of our marriage, were present for the births of our children, and knew more about us than we sometimes knew about ourselves. Though I took pieces of my job with the family business to California to work remotely, I left working side-by-side with my dad and brother on a daily basis. Some of you would be cheering, but I was heartbroken.

A year after making the move, we’d lived in 3 houses and were trying to set the foundation when the rug started to slide again: my family was selling the business. This meant they were selling my (clearly unrealistic) job security and my financial security (SoCal isn’t a cheap place to live—I needed to work) as well as taking away another link to home.

Then the rug disappeared like that magic trick where you whip the tablecloth out from under all the dishes (never figured out how they do that) landing me next to a new friend called “anxiety”. We got to know each other well quickly—even though I still really don’t like her at times. But she brought me to a place where I was able to detach myself from everything I’d ever known and think about the endless possibilities. She brought me to a place of stillness—I started out frozen in fear, but became at peace with the wide open space. (So much so, I had the words “be still” tattooed on my wrist.)



PHOTOGRAPHY BY CALEB SPENCER

It was in the space of being still that Belong was born. I had no idea what I was doing or how to do it (let's be honest, I still don't), but I decided (with the wise counsel of my board members--aka my husband) that I was going to publish a magazine for bloggers (see the word "blog" in belong?--clever, right?!).

I had spent years blogging as a creative side dish to my main course day-job, trying to hold onto my passions of creative writing, photography and graphic design from college. But it was lonely. The world wide web is a big, dark place if you don't know where you're going. I couldn't find my place or my people. It didn't feel good. And I really didn't want other women to feel lost too. So, I pooled my passions into a concept for a magazine that I hoped would serve as a road-map for bloggers to find one another. Put most simply, Belong was to be a light.

So I set a date and then made a list of things needed to get a magazine published by that date. Content, design, advertisers, printer, etc...

Due to the fact that my graphic design education was pre-digital (no, please don't do the math), I knew that I needed to find a designer that could bring Belong to life for me. Through the miraculous rabbit hole of Instagram, I found Laura Kashner (@laurakashner) who took my vision manifest in an amateur Pinterest board and turned it into something beyond what I could have imagined (seriously, how often does that happen!?). It was a match made in heaven!

(On a side note: Laura and I have never met in person—though I do hope we get the opportunity someday. And over the nearly 4 years we've worked together on Belong, we've only ever spoken on the phone another twice. Now if that's not a designer soul mate, I don't know what is! She just gets me!)

Belong Magazine's pilot issue released in the fall of 2015 and by early 2016 it was on the shelves of Barnes & Noble stores across the country. The original vision had evolved to include female entrepreneurs and creatives (which most bloggers are anyways). Belong is solely a contributor based platform where thousands of women (and a few men) have contributed their gifts and talents to be a light to others.

One of my favorite "accidents" of Belong was the centerfold. When our first issue needed two more pages, the centerfold idea was born. Laura and I loved the idea reimagining the concept of the centerfold transforming it into a space for words of encouragement and inspiration: you belong, just begin, you are enough, progress not perfection. It's been one of the most photographed and shared pieces of the publication which brings me such joy. All of these phrases are all straight from my heart—they've been influential and inspirational to me along my creative entrepreneurship journey.

While the content focuses on sharing actionable business tips, inspirational features and highlighting



PHOTOGRAPHY BY HAUTE STOCK

communities of female creatives and entrepreneurs all over the world, the layout, design and physical print edition are areas of great importance to me. There's just something about holding a magazine in your hand, right? The crackle of the spine, the pungent smell of the ink, the smooth swoosh of your hand over the cover. (But for those of you that prefer digital, I say, "To each her own!")

But that is not the end of my story! Nor is it the end of the story of *Belong*. Print publications are not inexpensive to produce which means that one needs subscribers, purchasers and sponsors (technically, "advertisers" but I don't like to think of them that way—they are part of the mission and vision by supporting what *Belong* is). But generating the income and curating the content is a lot for one person (me). I just wasn't able to do it all and make enough money to pay the bills.

I know what you may be thinking: FAILURE!

And yes, it felt a bit like that for me—and still does sometimes when I look around at all the other "successful" female entrepreneurs making six and seven figures. But then I look at the 15 issues that have been published, the instagram and facebook communities built, the emails in my inbox and the thousands of women who have been a part of this journey...and I think there is no way that this is failing. I am grateful for all of these things as they were a light during a dark and difficult transition. No, that is not failure.

Now, I'm back to work in healthcare full-time with a job that has me traveling around the country using the skills and experience I acquired while working for the family business. It's a lot, but I'm fortunate to be able to continue *Belong* as a passion project. Who knows what the future holds, right?!

Whether in Chicagoland or SoCal or Africa or in healthcare or online, there is a place for me. And there is a place for you. You belong.

You belong. That's the light in the darkness. 🌟

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HAUTE STOCK



That's my story, but here are the building blocks:

1. BE STILL / STEP AWAY, EVALUATE, READ, WRITE, LISTEN, SIT

- Use this time to see what it is you want to do and why you want to do it
- Don't limit yourself. Possibilities are endless.

2. JUST BEGIN / THERE IS NEVER A GOOD TIME, YOU JUST HAVE TO START.

- Put your idea into the world
- Set a deadline (or two) and just do it.

3. SET GOALS / PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

- PowerSheets are a game changer
- Baby steps

4. CULTIVATE / RELATIONSHIPS, IDEAS, BUSINESS

- Network (online or in real life)
- Stay authentic. Be you.

5. REPEAT / IF YOU DON'T, YOU'LL STOP GROWING.



Let's Flamingle

WWW.CABEPARTNERS.COM / @CABEPARTNERS

Get ready to ruffle your feathers!

Let's Flamingle, an event hosted by CAFE Partners in San Diego, was designed to connect influencers and other creatives with one another and local businesses. The venue, Co-mmunity La Jolla, boasted of a gorgeous rooftop which provided a 360 degree view of La Jolla and San Diego's finest beach.

Under the sweet, Southern California sun and amidst the food and vendors were clever art installations to create picture perfect moments which included inflatable pineapples and the event's mascot, a pink flamingo. An irresistible donut wall, cozy seating area and an array of smiling faces made the event the perfect platform for connection and community building.

But more than just a pretty party, Let's Flamingle provided valuable content through featured speakers including influencers Esmirna Tapia and Alex Sacedo, social media and blogging coach Carmen Varner, and fitness and lifestyle blogger Laura Nielsen shared their expertise with the assembled guests.

The perfect blend of people, purpose and party, Let's Flamingle was an event the attending influencers and businesses will not forget anytime soon.

What is CAFE? CAFE stands for California Bloggers/ Businesses and Entrepreneurs.

When Taylor Siwy, founder of CAFE Partners, first began blogging, she discovered it was difficult to find

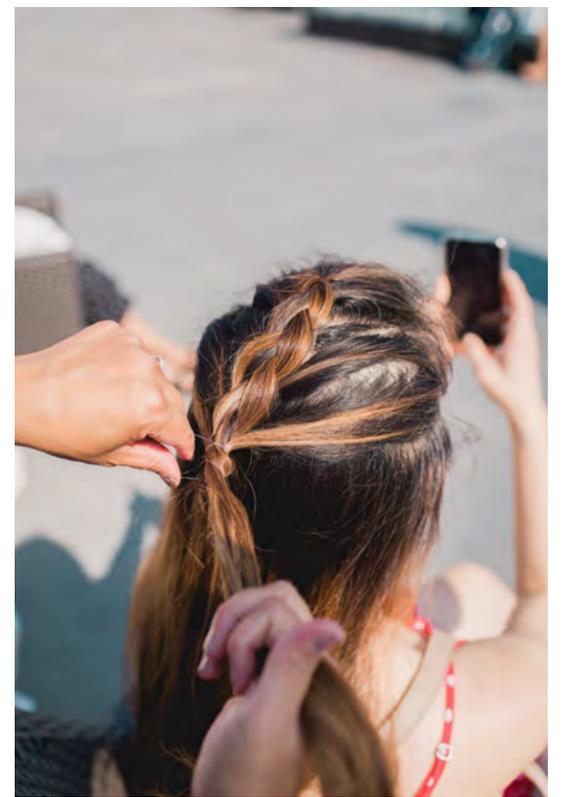
a community of people with like interests. She wanted to promote collaboration over competition and make genuine connections. She first initiated small content meet ups with local San Diego bloggers and photographers where they shoot content for their blogs and Instagram. From there, they started having events so that more people could connect. Later, she brought on Taylor Lueck as her business partner. With Taylor's creative focus and passion for community, CAFE continued to grow.

In addition to their social media marketing and event planning services, CAFE now proudly serves both businesses and influencers with networking events, workshops, and seminars curated uniquely for each.

Find them at www.cabepartners.com or [@cabepartners](https://www.instagram.com/cabepartners).

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 - CO-MMUNITY LA JOLLA

PHOTOS BY JOHANNA KITZMAN





The Imperfect Boss Camp

WWW.THEIMPERFECTBOSS.COM / @IMPERFECTBOSSES



Imagine driving three hours into the woods from any major city, unplugging from your scrolling and Wifi, and being surrounded by a community who has created a safe place for you to be totally yourself.

Imagine having real, soul-baring conversations and experiencing moments where these new-found friends see you (like really see you) and tell you the greatness that they see.

Imagine getting to play, be creative with your hands, learn personal development and intentional business advice and ending it by staring at the stars or leaving it on the dance floor.

Imagine feeling deeply connected to your own heart, deeply connected to the people around you and deeply connected to the potential that you were born to live out with confidence.

That's the Imperfect Boss Camp. The Camp is an immersive experience designed to help the creative woman grow her confidence and find community up close - most recently, in Haliburton, Ontario.

The Imperfect Boss Camp was inspired out The Imperfect Boss online community and their hashtag campaigns that have taken Instagram by storm and liberated women in the process.

Their message is simple: they want to prove that imperfect is normal and inspire you to grow your confidence. They believe wholeheartedly that who you are, both in your gifts and humanity, is necessary to get you bringing it to the world with boldness.

For four days, they do exactly that. Through inspirational keynotes, hands-on workshops, intimate mentor groups and evenings of fun, they dive deep into vulnerability, confidence, creativity and leadership. And the experience becomes nothing short of life-changing.

Don't just take their word for it, but lean into a couple stories of the women who were there.

Miranda Boisvert, a partnerships manager says, "The Imperfect Boss is unlike any other around women, creativity, entrepreneurship, and owning your stories. I left camp with a vitality I haven't felt in a very long time."

One of our camp mentors, Sarajane Case, had this to say about her time at camp: "The Imperfect Boss Camp changed my life. It reminded me of my worth and what kind of person I want to be in the world. I walked away with friendships that I know will be with me for a lifetime and a belief in my worth that has already impacted every aspect of my life and business."

In these four days in the woods, you'll remember who you are. You'll let go of things that have been holding you back. You'll experience the magic that happens outside of your comfort zone. You'll get that thing that you're really craving - real connection, real community, real transformation. 🔄

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA CHARUK





“The Imperfect Boss Camp changed my life. It reminded me of my worth and what kind of person I want to be in the world. I walked away with friendships that I know will be with me for a lifetime and a belief in my worth that has already impacted every aspect of my life and business.”

SARAJANE CASE





Society for Creative Founders Conference

Written By: Kristin Wilson, owner, Society For Creative Founders

WWW.SOCIETYFORCREATIVEFOUNDERS.COM / @CREATIVEFOUNDERS



The Society for Creative Founders is an online community for women that provides the tools, the knowledge, the education, and the encouragement you need to help you grow your business as a creative entrepreneur. Every year, we bring 26 women together for our Conference Experience in a beautiful home on Pensacola Beach, Florida, steps away from the Gulf of Mexico. This is the signature event we have become known for since our beginning in 2011 when we first began as Stationery Academy.

At the conclusion of our Conference every year, we ask our attendees to share with us three words to describe their experience. These in particular we hear again and again:

Rejuvenating, Life-Changing, Uplifting, Empowering, Transformative, and Inspiring.

And that fills our hearts purely with joy.

Although we teach mainly on business topics in main sessions when you are here, we also encourage you to think about the life you want to create while you are not building your business. We are all meant to have an incredible life, and have a business that supports that life, not the other way around. That is our primary goal for you to learn while you are here. When you head home from our Conference, you leave not only with an incredible community of women who are there to support you and lift you up while you pursue the dream of a business that has been planted on your heart to do, you also have the tools you need to create a life that you love.

Our Conference teaches sessions on six main pillars: Core, Client, Brand, Marketing, Money, and Plan. We give you the tools you need to develop an incredible foundation for your business and learn about who you are as an individual, teach you how to create a loved experience for your clients and customers, and help you to understand all aspects of your finances so that you can create a profitable and sustainable business each and every day. You also learn how create and elevate your brand, learn about a marketing plan, which is in itself such a vital part of running a business, and create a solid plan for everything moving forward so that you know what to work on first and build on next, and can hit the ground running when you get home.

Our goal is to empower and educate each person who joins us, giving you what you need to create the confidence in yourself as a maker, artist, and designer, while surrounding you with women who understand what it is like to run a creative business. Our speakers are hand-selected each year, and are experts in their specific fields. They are with you every day and present in each session, as we feel it is important for you to be able to connect with and get to know them on a personal level too.

We love to personalize as much as we can for each attendee, so we thoughtfully plan out every single detail long before our Conference begins. Our Experience is all inclusive, so we tell our attendees that all you need to do is get here, and then let us take care of the rest.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ASHLEY VICTORIA PHOTOGRAPHY



Every detail is thought of, sweet personalized surprises are nestled in to every day, and meals are even curated to your specific needs as well. We not only want you to feel pampered and cared for, but also seen for who you are and what you love. Our favorite evening is our “Celebration Dinner”, where we transform the room completely, share toasts and sweet sentiments, and the conversations often run long into the evening. Creating a personalized experience for each attendee is a vital part of our Conference every year, and is something we look forward to just as much as the sessions we teach.

Our Conference wouldn't be what it is without the “swag” that is gifted to our attendees as well. The products received each day are primarily from previous Conference alums as a way for them to “pay it forward”, in addition to incredible sponsors we are blessed to work with each and every year. We work with each one personally, so that every product you bring home isn't just something pretty on the table, but rather is a resource or a vendor that you can use for your business to move it forward even more.

The most important part of stepping foot into this experience rather than participating only online is the relationships that are formed, that quickly turn into amazing friendships. Once you join this Community, you become a part of an instant family. The community that we have is one that we pride ourselves upon, as you have a group of women to lean on every step of the way. We encourage each and every woman to let your walls down and come as you are, so that we can help you right where you are in your specific season.

Recently, one of our attendees shared, “In 10+ years I have not felt worthy or enough, in any regard. I allowed people to tear me down and make me feel like nothing. Being able to let go of everything and be me, and hear

every story, every tear, every accomplishment to get through everything to where they are now, was life-changing. It felt so amazing to embrace other women who were going through the exact same things as me, especially hugely successful women, to know they had been there too. After the Conference, my mindset shifted entirely, I walked away knowing my worth, and feel such a strength from everyone at the Conference. I am using that as a guiding light in the next chapter of my life.”

It doesn't matter if you've been in business for four months or ten years, if you've had one sale or thousands, because we all can learn from each other and bring something to the table. What you learn here is something you can apply to your business and life for years in the future, and you are surrounded by a community of women that continues to build each other up and support one other on a daily basis.

One of our Fall Conference attendees, Tyler Bedwell of Studio B Print Shop said, “The Creative Founders Conference surpassed anything I could have imagined. Not only did I leave feeling inspired and ready to hit the (creative) road running, but have made friendships and connections with other women makers that I didn't think was possible in such a short period of time. The positivity and encouragement from each individual was mind-blowing. I highly recommend others who are seeking this type of experience to leap and go!”

We are made up of so many women, and it's each person, individually, but working together, that makes the Society for Creative Founders what it is. If you are a creative entrepreneur wanting to run an incredible business and be surrounded by a community of incredible women who will welcome you in with open arms, I hope that we will have the privilege of having you join us at our next Conference Experience. [🔗](#)







PHOTOGRAPHY BY BECKI SMITH OF SMITH HOUSE PHOTO

WorkParty Tour

WWW.WORKPARTY.COM / [@WORKPARTY](https://www.instagram.com/workparty)

WorkParty is a movement for women who are redefining the meaning of work on their own terms. Powered by Create & Cultivate, the celeb-studded conference for millennial women in business, WorkParty includes a book, authored by Jaclyn Johnson and a podcast, hosted by the same.

After its release, WorkParty went on a 10-city tour stopping in locations like Miami, Austin, Los Angeles, New York, and more where Jaclyn Johnson invited women to join her to sit down with some of the most remarkable women in business who brought their own work party to life. Among these women were Kendra Scott, Jen Gotch, Lo Bosworth, Rebecca Minkoff, Lisa Price and more.

The WorkParty tour is presented by Microsoft Teams and held at WeWork locations nationwide. [🔗](#)



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about the artist



Peggy Dean

Peggy Dean is a best-selling author and educator with a focus on modern calligraphy, watercolor and gouache painting, and line drawing. As a self-taught artist, she has a soft spot for ensuring that anyone with a passion feels empowered to be able to create, embrace the imperfections, and live out loud so she uses her platform (The Pigeon Letters) as a foundation to connect the importance of creativity and mental health while traveling the world for speaking engagements and hands-on workshops. Peggy lives and works in Portland Oregon with her wife and three fur babies.

FOLLOW PEGGY AT:
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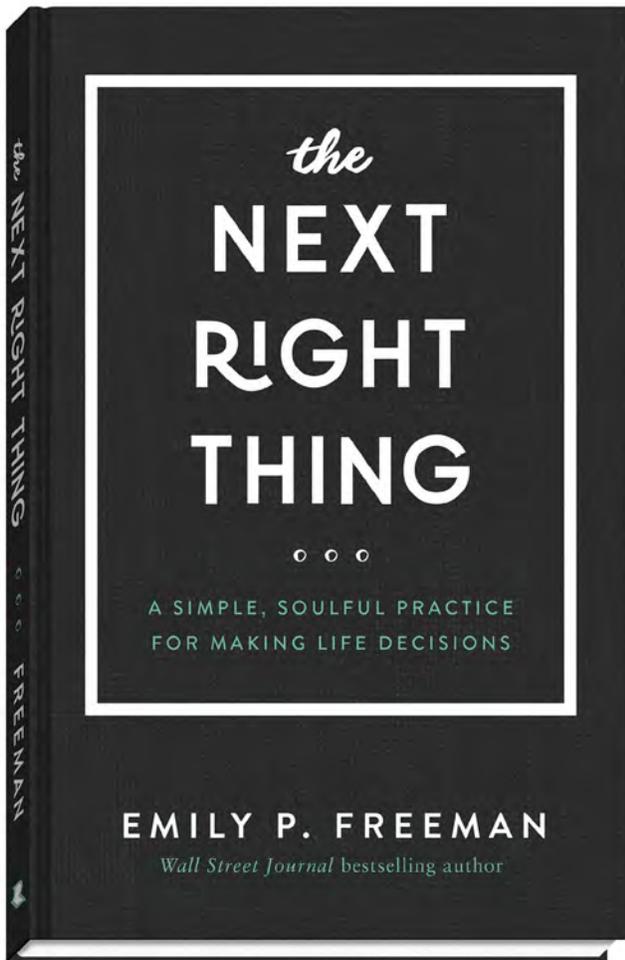
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