



How to Make Your Business Work for YOU (instead of the other way around)

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

“If you're afraid of sales and you're not willing to work on it, you're going to have a really hard time staying in business, so revenue-generating activities are those activities that bring you cha-ching.”

You're listening to Thrive-By-Design business marketing and lifestyle strategies for your jewelry brand to flourish and thrive. Let's get started.

- Intro: You're listening to Thrive by Design, business, marketing, and lifestyle strategies for your jewelry brand to Flourish & Thrive. . Let's get started.
- Tracy: Welcome to the Thrive By Design podcast episode 156. Today, I am here with my co-founder, Robin. Hey, Rob!
- Robin: Woo hoo! Yay! [laughter] Hi, Tracy! Hi, everyone!
- Tracy: Great to be here together! For those of you who don't know, we are the founders of Flourish and Thrive Academy. I am the Chief Visionary Officer over there, and Robin is our Community Guru/Business Development Maven/Wholesale Expert/Everything Sales...
- Robin: [laughter]
- Tracy: Grow your business with expert over at Flourish and Thrive... [laughter]
- Robin: [laughter] Tracy, are you calling me a slasher?
- Tracy: A slasher? No really, I'd like to call you the mother hen, but you don't like that because you're the nurturer... [laughter]
- Robin: [laughter] Mother nurturer!
- Tracy: Mother nurturer! [laughter] Today is a really special day because it is our 6th birthday here at Flourish and Thrive, and I can't believe that we've made it to six, Robin.





Robin: Made it, holy cow! It's been amazing! I just can't believe six years have gone by so quickly.

Tracy: I know, it's so crazy. Today, is our special birthday episode. Every single year, we have an awesome birthday episode, which is super-duper fun, and when we were thinking about the topic for this episode, you want to make it light and conversational so it's not like... It's going to be a learning episode, but it's also going to be sort of like a retrospective of things that we've learned here because we really want to honor you, and one thing that both of us have been kind of working towards over the past, I would say two years, is really to make our business work for us instead of the other way around, and I know that both of us probably felt, at different times, the business is kind of running us, we're on this vicious cycle, trying to move forward, whether it's in our businesses or working together at Flourish and Thrive, and it's been a big journey over the last couple years, getting to the place where we both are, working in our zone of genius, and being able to show up for the community in the best way possible. Robin, what do you have to say about that? Because I know you have a lot... A lot has changed, and I think we're going to talk about some of that here.

Robin: The biggest thing for me has just been life happens, and really kind of finding the way to make it work best for each of us and to also, as you said, continue to honor the designers and makers we work with because, really, that's why we started doing this in the first place, and it's like with any business. Things are going to ebb and flow and change all the time, and it really is important to come back to what makes you excited about your business, what makes you happy about your business, and that may change your business format a little bit. It's always good to step away and look at how are things going, and how are we serving our customer, and things change. I love being able to have that perspective on business because if you don't grow in your business, you're not going to prosper, and that is very apparent in a lot of companies that don't take a step back and look what they're doing and how they're doing it.

Tracy: Absolutely. And so there is so much to be said about all this, so before we kind of dive in, I'm excited to celebrate our birthday episode, and we're going to be sharing a way to get our annual birthday gift as well, so you want to definitely listen to this because we're going to have an amazing, amazing freebie, which we will tell you shortly and during the episode, so you're going to have to listen





on how you can get it, but, of course, we're going to have links over at the Show Notes. We're not giving spoilers over here, so you can check that out over at [www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode 156](http://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode%20156), but before we dive in, I want to take a word from our sponsor.

Today's sponsor is Halstead. I love working with family-owned businesses, and that is one of the reasons why I love Halstead so much. Plus, if you listened to episodes 152 and 153 this year, you've met Hilary Halstead-Scott, the president and CEO of Halstead Inc., and I just love working with them for a couple of reasons. Number one, they support small jewelry brands and emerging designers. In fact, they have this amazing grant that they release every single year so make sure that you apply if you are a US business, that you've been in business for three years or less, and you are working on sterling silver in your designs, definitely check out the Halstead Grant. Applications close August 1st. This application is not like go and fill it out in 5 minutes. It's definitely sort of like writing a business plan because they really want to pick a great brand who has really thought out their business strategy. I am excited to present this because last year's winner of the Halstead Grant was one of our very own Flourish and Thrive Mastermind members, Kristen Baird-Rabun. She was on the podcast last year talking about how she revamped her website super quickly, and we also talked a little bit about the Halstead Grant. You never know, I might have her back on the show, but I wanted to just mention this because it's a really great opportunity, and I know several of our Flourish and Thrive winners have been Halstead runners up, and we really love supporting them because we think what they're doing is a really amazing, amazing thing. So make sure that you check it out. You can apply over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/HalsteadGrant. We will also have a link over in the Show Notes. Plus, if you are newer to Halstead and you haven't heard of them before and you'd like to check out some really amazing wholesale jewelry supplies, make sure that you head on over to www.halsteadbead.com and do a little shopping. They are giving \$10 off for new members of the Halstead Community by entering the code THRIVE at checkout, and you can receive that discount before July 30, 2018. Make sure that you check it out now, sooner rather than later, because we want to get you in for some supply hookups over here at Flourish and Thrive. Alright, on to our episode today.





Tracy: Okay, cool, that was so awesome. So, Robin, I'm just excited to be here with you today because 6 years is a long time, and I remember when we were starting this business, this is so funny, my friend Whitney will think this is funny, because I was in Portland for an event, the World Domination Summit, and my friend Whitney, who is a good friend of my from San Francisco, moved to Portland many years ago to be back by her family because that's where she grew up. So I said, "Hey, Whitney, I'm going to be in Portland. Can you hang out during this time?" And she invited me on her family vacation to go to the Oregon coast for the Fourth of July weekend, and we were going to be there through July 5th, and July 5th was our day that we put our website live for the first time, and that's why it's our birthday, and I remember, with Robin, I was such a weirdo. I'm such a weirdo with timing... I was like, we've got to pick the perfect date. I was talking to my friend, who is an astrologer. She picked the date for us. The website went live on July 5th, six years ago. I was on the beach on the Oregon coast, hitting the button, and it was just me, you, and our virtual assistant at the time, Peter. Do you remember that?

Robin: Oh, my gosh! I totally remember that! [laughter]

Tracy: It was so funny! They were like, why are you working on your vacation? And I was like, you don't understand, I'm launching my website today! [laughter]
Kind of push the button!

Robin: It's a good day! [laughter] The stars are aligned! [laughter]

Tracy: And I wish I could find our first version of our website because it was so terrible... it was so terrible... And all we had, it was a very simple WordPress blog kind of site. It had a sidebar opt-in... We've come such a long way.

Robin: Oh, my gosh.

Tracy: We had a sidebar opt-in that did two things. It was like, fill in our survey... Basically, like fill in our survey to win a free coaching session, and then we had some other download. I can't remember what it was, and we launched the site, and then three weeks later, we opened up enrollment for the early-bird pricing for "Laying the Foundation" for the first time. Remember that?

Robin: Oh, my gosh, which was amazing, because you know what, Tracy? All of those "Laying the Foundation" designers who took that very first course are still





involved with Flourish and Thrive in some capacity. It's just incredible, the community. I love how it just solidifies what we envisioned.

Tracy: Absolutely, and it's so fun because, [laughter], I keep thinking back, and I'm like giggling to myself because we built a list, and this is where you can come so far. We built a list of 300 people, and it was all people I knew, that you knew, or people that we met on these online forums. I don't even know how we [laughter] built our list to start with. It was so funny, and then what eventually ended up happening is we got a bunch of people to sign up for our freebie, and then we presold our first course to 19 people or 18 people. We knew most of them [laughter] personally, and we launched it in September, and so middle of July, we did basically like a proof of concept launch. We wanted to see if people were actually interested in it. We're like, 18 people is not bad. That's good, especially if we have such a small list, and then ended up selling it to 50 people, and success that those 50 people had at that time was just so amazing. I can't remember if Sandy was the same year or not, but I feel like that during that first "Laying the Foundation" course, I actually was recording... I mean, I still record a lot of things in the closet like my podcast, but I was recording trainings in my sister's closet because the electricity was out in my apartment [laughter], and I had to basically go live in her studio, and we were both working from her tiny studio apartment, and I was doing a Pinterest training with Andreea Ayers in the closet. [laughter]

Robin: Oh, my gosh. I totally remember this.

Tracy: But this is just to go say, wow, we've come a long way since then, and the point of us even sharing any of this is just it's kind of fun to watch how businesses grow, and so this is really to honor you and the stages of growth in your business. We all start somewhere, right? Sometimes it's like with a super janky website, and we're doing the best we can, and then as soon as we can, you make better iterations and better revisions of your brand and your website, and things change because you're continue to focus on moving your business forward, and over that course of that period, you might get caught up in your business, and it feels like your business is actually running you instead of you running your business, so that's sort of what we want to talk about today, is how to make your business work for you instead of being a slave for it, which is I think what can happen if you're not careful, and so this is the happy episode.





It's going to be a good one, and it's meant to empower you. We may also talk about some things; call out some things in stages where you might be right now. Right, Rob?

Robin: Absolutely, and I want to remind everybody it's all about celebration, too. We're looking at growth, we're looking at some uncomfortable things, but we're also looking to celebrate, look where you've come from, right? [laughter]

Tracy: Yup! And the one thing that I want to remind you all is that growth does not happen in a vacuum, and with any type of change, change is the only constant in the universe, and I don't know who that quote is attributed to, but I used to say it all the time in my yoga classes, when I would be teaching, because the only thing that we can ever expect is that things are going to change, and Robin and I founded this company six years ago. At the beginning of the year, we made a really big announcement that we were still going to be working together, but the nature of our relationship was going to be changing because I really wanted to be focused on some bigger things that I wanted to do. Robin wanted to be focused on some bigger things that she wanted to do. We're really building Flourish and Thrive to be about the community and our team of coaches and not as much just about us. I mean, obviously, we are here are your biggest cheerleaders and the cofounders of this company, but we know that there are so many people out there who know just as much, or even more sometimes, about certain things than just us, and we wanted to be able to bring you all the best education. So we're expanding that a lot this year.

You're going to be noticing over the next year, a lot of changes happening at Flourish and Thrive, which sort of started with this announcement that we had the beginning of the year, but this was going to be the last time that we had planned to run "Laying the Foundation" in the live format. Instead, we'll still offering... "Laying the Foundation" is our signature course, that's the course we started with, the one we got the 19 people to buy in the presale and 50 people total, the first round out of the gate. It was our signature program, and it was a life changing program for some many designers and also one of our core offerings here at Flourish and Thrive because we really do think it's important. It is more for people who are either trying to get consistent sales and/or more in the earlier stages of business who haven't quite figured out that branding and sales and marketing piece, so for anyone who is kind of struggling to get to their





next phase of exposure or development, I should say, with that. But it's also great for businesses that have been in business for a while who need a little tweaking and haven't quite landed their messaging or having difficulty kind of finding what they're all about, but, beyond that, one of the biggest reasons I wanted to start Flourish and Thrive Academy was for completely different reason, which was more about the businessy side of things, like the super-businessy stuff that none of us really want to talk about. Robin, remember when I was coming to you to talk about "Multiply Your Profits", and how we started mapping out our courses and our ascension plan for how we were going to filter people through, like the offerings at Flourish and Thrive?

Robin: Oh, yeah! Oh, my gosh! [laughter]

Tracy: I remember when we first met, I mean Robin and I have known each other for a long time, not when we actually first met, but when we first met, to kind of think through Flourish and Thrive and our strategy here and how we were going to help people. The first thing I wanted to do was help people build systems because I'm terrible at it, and I think [laughter] you teach what you suck at, in a way, because... I mean obviously, we've learned workarounds. Like I have a highly creative mind; I'm always working with my teams to create structure in this business, for both of my businesses, but it does not come naturally to me, and I think most, not all because I've met some highly-structured, OCD-type people in our community who are really good at systems and creativity, which is really, in most cases, an anomaly, but I know that most of us also don't like to deal with things, like the finances or that we are really baffled about how to hire to people or we kind of treat our business like a hobby and not a real business, like a hobby business instead of being a real business owner, and so that was really where I wanted to start. We sat down and we started mapping out "Laying the Foundation", our signature course, and it turned out it was going to be like a year-long program, where I'm like, we can't do that, it's too overwhelming! [laughter] Do you remember that?

Robin: Oh, my gosh! Yeah, because we sat down, and we literally were like, oh, my gosh, there's more than one course here. [laughter]

Tracy: Yeah. So we ended up breaking it up into two signature platforms, and then we realized this signature core offerings that we were developing for the jewelry industry, there was just so much even more beyond that, and so that's why we





kind of evolved into having our Diamond Insiders group, which is really about showing you your next step, bringing the of-the-moment business, marketing, sales things that are coming onto the market that might change over time, so we didn't want to put those into our core programs because some of those things change so frequently, we'd have to revisit the program all the time, and it just didn't make sense to incorporate that in there, and then, also, the evolution of our higher level programs, like our Mastermind that we had for many years and our SOS coaching program that we just launched last year to support people in their journey for building their business online and creating a really strong online presence regardless of your business model. So if you're doing E-commerce or your main business model is getting in front of people at shows or you're trying to do wholesale, just like trying to figure out how to create that online presence or even if you're doing what I do, the custom work, to attract more sales and leads through your online presence, and I think people are baffled because they don't understand how to turn that traffic into sales, and I have to say, even some of the most established designers that we know who have very robust, successful wholesale businesses. I've heard many of them say to me, like is it even possible to have a successful online business, and the answer is yes. I've seen designers of ours who may or may not be customers and/or coaches of ours, have insanely great online businesses, and they're selling a ton E-commerce. I think everything is possible with the right strategy. It just depends on where your focus is. As we've continued to grow, I think Robin realized that our focuses were just in kind of different places, and Robin, you took a little bit of a step back from our community to kind of think about some things that you wanted to do, so I'd love to kind of share more about what you're doing for the wholesale industry and the wholesale side of jewelry industry and even beyond that. Why don't you share a little bit more about your coaching program?

Robin: Thank you. Well, some exciting things. I had the opportunity to speak at ACRE, which is now American Handcrafted, and that was in February, and they've asked me back to speak again in October, and I'm at their show in Orlando, so that was really exciting, and I love connecting... Tracy knows, a tradeshow...

Tracy: Yes.

Robin: ... is like my crack! [laughter]





Tracy: She loves it.

Robin: [laughter] I love connecting with people. Networking is one of my favorite things, but really learning about the different designers and getting to see the product in person is so... just... in person, is my happy place, and also working with designers one-on-one and really nurturing... I believe there is no such word as balance because I think life is like waves that you are sometimes on the top of the wave or sometimes on the bottom of the wave, [laughter], and it's learning how to surf, and that's true in every business, right? But I love to help designers navigate, and wholesale is one of my favorite things because I really do love the connection between the stores and the designers, and I think maybe growing up, my mom had a store, so that had a lot to do with it. I come from a retail background, and so I have launched or launching in the process of a really special wholesale intensive for just ten designers, and it really is focused on... Tracy and I talk a lot about what your business is for you. You can't compare your business to anybody else's business. I always want to come back to a designer and say well what do you want? Just because Susie-Q over here has 180 stores or does all of her business online or whatever the case may be, it's really coming back to what do you want? So it's really helping designers if they're wanting to do wholesale, if they're currently doing wholesale. This is really to help the designer who is ready to take their wholesale business to that next level.

Tracy: Yes, awesome.

Robin: I'm excited.

Tracy: We'll have links about how you can find out more and get on a call with Robin in the Show Notes about that, but the thing that I love that is so great about this program that you're doing is that it's focused on your zone of genius, which is really the wholesale piece, and I know sometimes in a group, for instance, our Mastermind program was so great, but there were some people who wanted to focus on wholesale and some people who wanted to focus on online and all this stuff, and I think that the more focused we can get in our offerings over here at Flourish and Thrive, that's why SOS is focused on online presence and how do use that to grow your business based on where you are in your business model, but for you, like Robin, there is really no one who is better at this than Robin. There is no one else better at building the relationships than Robin and coming





up with the strategy, and we all know this, and you probably heard us talk about this. Building a wholesale business is not a short, quick, and dirty thing. It's really a long game, and it's about building relationships, and the one thing that I love that you have is that you have really good contacts, and you've been able to introduce so many designers that we've worked with together and separately to some really amazing accounts. Like, I know Camilla at Cinnamon Sticks Jewelry is just killing it right now with UncommonGoods, which has been fantastic. She is doing so great right now, she's like reporting to me all the time about her craziness with that, so...

Robin: You know, it's exciting.

Tracy: I think it's awesome because like, you know... I keep saying you know – you know! You know!

Robin: [laughter]

Tracy: You know! I'm trying to cut out filler words when I speak, and it is very hard, literally, actually amazing... you know! [laughter]

Robin: [laughter]

Tracy: It's kind of funny! On a side mark! So, we're definitely going to be sharing more about this. If you're interested in working with Robin in a one-on-one perspective, this is really perfect for people who have... It's not really for beginners in wholesale because there is some foundational stuff, and if you are interested in learning the basics of wholesale, then you should definitely check out our Mastering Wholesale course.

Robin: Absolutely.

Tracy: And we will have Mastering Wholesale linked in the Show Notes. This is really for people who have kind of gotten the groundwork going in their wholesale game, but they really want to take it to the next level, maybe go from having just a couple of stores to maybe 20 to 50 in the next year. If you're a super beginner and you don't have any accounts or just like 1 or 2, focus on kind of building that up and then get on Robin's waiting list because I know this is... The ten people that get into this program are just going to be so lucky because she will give you everything. She is such an over giver, which is...





Robin: [laughter]

Tracy: And it's really going to be helpful for you. So for those of you who are super laser focused on that business model, I highly recommend that you go check out what Robin has to offer. Thanks for sharing that, Robin.

Robin: Oh, Tracy, thank you. I am so excited. I have lots of fun things in store for these ten designers, and I already have a museum buyer, who is going to be talking with them who has been in the industry for a long time. So lots of great industry connections that I have that I can't wait to introduce to...

Tracy: Amazing!

Robin: ... lucky designers.

Tracy: This is going to be amazing. Robin, do you want to hear what my exciting thing that I'm...

Robin: I absolutely do! [laughter]

Tracy: [laughter]

Robin: Tell me, tell me!

Tracy: So I've been doing a lot. I've been doing a lot of soul searching over the last couple of years, and as we're recording this because it's a couple weeks before our birthday, our real birthday, I just got back from a workshop in Milwaukee where I was focused on signature talk because something that has really been nagging me, eating at me for a long time is this dichotomy that happens when you start a business, and you're highly creative, and you're considering yourself that visionary role because a lot of times we start a business because it's something that we're really passionate about because we're really good at doing something, we have a lot of ideas, but then we start running the business, and we realize, oh, my gosh, this is so hard, or I'm being bogged down by all these details and all these other things that I have to do, and we get stuck in this thing where we have to make a decision. Do I move forward or do I get the right support to help me grow the business? And I've done both. I would say that the best way is go really get the support and continue growing the business and learn how to structure your business the right way. That's why I'm so passionate. That's why, at the beginning, when we were starting Flourish and





Thrive – do you see how I'm circling this around? I was so passionate about starting “Multiply Your Profits” because that course... That was exactly what I needed when I was getting to that next stage in my business, we're going to talk about the stages momentarily, in that growth stage because I didn't have the structure and the systems in place and the ability to actually train my team, and so I hired people, and I expected them to just know what to do and they know how to do it my way, [laughter], and that's like expecting the incredible. That would never happen. People don't know who you are when you hire them. They don't know what your expectations are unless you set them for them. They don't know your way of doing them, things if you don't tell them what they are or wait from them to follow it, that's concrete and easy for them to reference, and so over the past 25 years of being an entrepreneur, I didn't really get that first 12 years in business until the very end of my first business. It wasn't probably until year 9, 10, 11 that I started to really understand the destruction I was having on the people that worked for me and the insight of my company by not having this stuff in place. I have also seen how much I've grown by learning how to make this work for me, and this is why I'm so passionate about today's episode because it's all really about the different stages of growth in your business and how to make your business work for you, and it's been really exciting.

I had dinner with my friend, Jenny, probably about six months ago. I said I have this idea, this has been like over a year in the making, I was at Brendon Burchard's event, and I'm telling her this story about performance academy, and Brendon said you have to state this big, hairy goal that you have that you don't believe is possible right now, and I said I want to have a TED talk with 10 million views, and I think I even said... I might have said... I don't know if I said 10 or 20 million views. I think I upped the game to 20 million, but then I realized that the most popular TED talks ever, like Simon Sinek have 20 million. [laughter] So if we can go back to 10 million! But it was all around this concept that creators rule the world, and I really do have this belief that our creative energy and our ability to come up with unique innovative ideas is the thing that keeps business and the world going around, and I was sitting here talking with Jenny. She was like, well, I kind of think creatives are the new nerds because this is where the next phase is. You're the one who is nerding out on creativity and trying to figure out how you're creative ideas are moving your business forward, and so it's going to be some... My signature talk will be around that. I'm really excited about it, but





dialing it down to really just the nuts and bolts of what it takes to be a visionary and really stand in the role of visionary in your company, and I have really encouraged people for the last five or six years to call themselves the chief visionary officer of their business, not the CEO, especially the highly creatives because you are... You're probably going to be the CEO, but you're also the most important asset to your company in a lot of ways if you really identify with being a visionary because you're the one who has the ideas that actually make the business move forward, but the way you need to make your businesses work is by getting the right support, and that's what it's all about, and it took me 25 years to kind of figure this out. We have an awesome team. I mean, Robin, would you agree that our team at Flourish and Thrive...

Robin: Oh, my gosh!

Tracy: ... is just like insanely amazing.

Robin: It's incredible, and I want to just tell everybody. I mean, it took a long time to find the right people, and don't give up. Don't... What do they say? Don't stop until the miracle happens? Don't give up because there are wonderful people out there that are right for your business, and it didn't mean that we didn't have great people working for us at some point, but that they just weren't right for that particular... what we needed...

Tracy: I think it's more like you hire people at a certain phase in business, and they get you to where...

Robin: The next, yeah...

Tracy: The next step, but then sometimes they outgrow or your outgrow... You guys outgrow each other, and they need to move on. We've had... I remember the early years. I was like, gosh, Robin, can we keep someone? [laughter]

Robin: [laughter]

Tracy: It was like what is going on? And I think that's normal in a small startup phase because there are people who just don't really want to work that hard; that's some of it. They just want to coast, and they work for entrepreneurially companies because they think it's going to be easy, but in reality, it's a lot harder than working for a corporation because they can't hide. Things start to come into light really quickly when it's a small startup, and I think my biggest





mistake that I would say I consistently made over the years was that I held on to relationships... I could use the word dysfunctional, which maybe that's a little harsh, but some of them were dysfunctional at different times... Dysfunctional business relationships with either contractors or employees just because it was easier to keep them there then to just try and find someone new, but I want to just invite you to just learn and discover how to, number one, become a better leader, identify how to actually hire people the right way, and when to get the right support because that's really where the growth starts to come, and so I want to cycle this back to the topic today, which I think is really celebrating you and making your business work for you because I think what Robin and I realized, it's becoming to a head, probably for the last two years, is that we were growing and evolving. I know Robin so well that if I wasn't going to make the decision, she would have just kept going along, and it wasn't really like that, but we had to... I forced some conversations that were really tough about us continuing to do some of the stuff over here because I knew that Robin was going to shine in her highest light, focusing on a program that was specifically catered to wholesale, and it was hard to get there, would you say, Robin?

Robin: Well, yes...

Tracy: Hard and easy, maybe...

Robin: Yeah, and also with some personal stuff that I was dealing with, so yes.

Tracy: But good, at the same time. I mean, there was a lot going on, and you were going through a big evolution and change, and I'm just so excited for this for you. That's what I have to say.

Robin: Thank you.

Tracy: I really am, and it's been something we've been talking about it for almost a year now, and so I'm just excited that it's getting off the ground and we're able to support you in this because it's good, but also I've seen... I know we've watched so many of our designers kind of grow and evolve through these different stages of business, see how things have kind of gone through.

I just want to kind of walk through the stages. We're going to use some of the people that we know in our Flourish and Thrive community, not only as examples, but sort of like how the evolution of our business has grown because I





think this is valuable for anyone. It doesn't matter if you are just in startup phase, if you're seeding an idea, if you're at a place where you actually want to sell your business already, but there are definitive stages in growing your business, and these are universal truths. This has been pulled from many things that I've learned and experienced over the years from multiple mentors, so this is not original content. I can't say that I'm coming up with this content, but this is just phases of business, and once you've been in business for a while, it's just really awesome to kind of be able to identify where you are.

In most businesses, it starts with just an idea phase, or as they call in the tech world, ideation. My friend, Dan Martell had a program. He is a big software tech startup guy and has sold multiple businesses, and they really call it from idea to exit, like that was the name of his program because it really starts with an idea, and then the phases of business so that you can get out and maybe exit your company some day or go into the mature stages of a business as you continue to grow, and so the idea is really that stage is about designing or identifying that you have this passion for designing jewelry. Now what do you do next? Do you start a business with it? Do you keep a hobby? Do you want to sell your products? Like what is next?

Robin, I know that we worked with so many designers in this phase. What are some of the observations that you've noticed about designers who are just kind of in this idea part of business?

Robin: I think they're just trying to find what they really want to do. I think a lot of times when people come into the industry, they think, oh, gosh, I have to create a collection, I can't do one of a kind, or I can't do this, or I can't do that, so really looking at what they want to do, and it's the beginning... I just feel like it's the beginning stages, and either they're timid and don't do enough, or they can't stop. [laughter]

Tracy: [laughter].

Robin: Yeah, too much. So I think this is the phase where they're really kind of honing on their dream client and how to really make the most of what they do and do it well.

Tracy: Absolutely, and all that prep work, it's really just kind of coming up with the idea, and the startup phase, which is phase two, is really about taking that idea





and making it come to life. This is where all that grit and gumption kind of comes in, like nailing down your dream client, understanding what your brand is all about, setting that strong foundation. This is where “Laying the Foundation” comes into a huge play, and the idea in the startup and growth phase, for sure. But understanding what it really takes to grow a business, to get your business off the ground, and start making your first \$50,000 within revenue for your business, and this is the hardest part because I feel like a lot of people get stuck in the startup phase, and they struggle to keep moving it forward, and this is the phase where I think people really struggle with that, the thing of like, I love to make jewelry, that's all I really want to do, but I want to have a business, but they don't want to focus on the RGAs.

Let's talk a little bit about the RGAs, Robin.

Robin: Revenue generating activities! [laughter] If you're afraid of sales, and you're not willing to work on it, you're going to have a really hard time staying in business, so revenue generating activities are those activities that bring you cha-ching! [laughter]

Tracy: They bring you the cha-ching, and this is, I think, the hardest thing for many designers that we mentor in this startup phase is that they can't find that balance between how much time do I spend bringing in revenue and selling, and how much time do I spend doing the creative things, and how do I organize my day in order to make this work for me? Remember, this episode is about making your business work for you.

So what I can say is structure, structure, structure. You're going to fight against structure, but it will be best friend and having certain days for certain tasks. We talk a lot about time blocking over here. That's going to be really important, especially if you don't have support or other people helping you. You have to maximize your time. You have to know exactly what each day of the week is going to be focused on, and you need to create a lot of space for creativity too, and I recommend doing that on just one day of the week or in two really wide windows twice a week. Don't have creative time every single day. Focus certain days of the week on actually just getting the business stuff done, most of your time doing that, and then leave the space open for the creativity. That's when you have time to plan, come up with the ideas in market, and sit in your content creation mode of trying to come up with ideas to market your business because





that's going to be the thing that really helps you get to the next phase, which is growth, because all these things have compounding effects to get you from startup to growth. The startup phase, towards the end of the startup phase, is probably when you start hitting that tipping point when you want to start thinking about hiring a team, and a team can look like independent contractors, just having someone come and run your social media, or an assistant who comes in and helps you ship product, or a couple people who come in and help you make the jewelry – you know look in a lot of different ways, and sometimes that might be in the startup phase and sometimes it might be in the growth phase. It depends on how much you want to do and how you want to be that person working for your business instead of on your business, but I would say the quicker you get people in to help you. I mean, you obviously have to have the financial grounding to do that, in a sense. You have to have enough sales to support it. I don't really recommend hiring people before your sales support it, unless you have some sort of backing and a really strong business plan and you're moving things forward because otherwise you will be going broke really, really fast, and we want to keep you in business, and so that startup phase is really the hardest part. It's like getting over that tipping point to get into the growth phase, is my opinion.

And the growth phase is the third phase of really growing your business. This is where it starts to really amp up and crank. This is where all the momentum that you built starts to compound on top of each other. This is where you start hiring more team. This is where everyone gets worn too thin and feels they're so many balls in their court, and this is probably the stage where a lot of people want to start to backtrack back to a different phase in business because it's get hard. The growth phase is hard. This is where the systems in setting up best practices and SOP manuals. You should have all that from the beginning, but inevitably, a one-person shop doesn't do it. Because we have it all in our head, and we think we know everything...

Robin: [laughter]

Tracy: But the earlier you can start this, the better for everyone, but this is where this growth phase is where it becomes really important to start structuring things in your business because the more structure you can create, the more strength you're going to build on the insider of your business, and Robin, I know you've





helped build a lot of operations manuals and SOP manuals and sales manuals for companies, what's your thoughts here?

Robin: I think that it's essential. I think one of the biggest things I see with designers is that they'll do something but not take the time to document it, and if you're going to grow in your business, you have to have some sort of systems and processes in place. That is where you actually see the change and see the opportunity too to maybe do things a little differently. I think when you're just in do mode, that even something as simple as shipping out your product, you could be saving yourself so much time by having things in place, by having processes in place, so I see this as being essential to growth.

Tracy: Essential.

Robin: Mhh hhm.

Tracy: And this is what gets you to the next phase, which is scale. When you have systems for growth, this is how you get your business to the next level, and I feel like this is sort of when you came into Dogeared. They were right at that stage. They were in that growth stage. They had a really good business. They'd been in business for a long time, and then you and Inta came in and helped scale that bad boy.

Robin: [laughter] Yeah, they really didn't have too many systems in place. They were in the process of... They were ready to grow. They were ready to invest because a lot of times you've got to invest in your business if you want to see growth, so I really commend them for realizing that and taking the leap, and it was very empowering for them because then the designer, Marcia, could get back to doing what she loved the most...

Tracy: Um hmm.

Robin: And by putting the right people in place to oversee production, operations, and to oversee sales, and really... The sky was the limit. As they say in Dogeared, the sky is not the limit, [laughter] because we surpassed so many of our goals, but it was because we had a great team and because we started putting, really systems in place to do this, and it is so essential to have a team that works together, too. So, super important, and, as a friend of mine likes to say, she has been in the industry a long time. She's like, I was a 21-year-old overnight





success, meaning that she had been in her business 21 years before it boomed, not that it's going to take you 21 years, but for Dogeared, I joined them, and they were 14 years old, so they were ready to explode. They just needed the right people to take them there, which was really fantastic. It was an incredible time to be there.

Tracy: Yeah, so you probably entered them right at the end of the growth stage, right before the scale stage, and so in order to get to that scale stage where they're compounding all their efforts, like they needed all that systems support and team around them to get to that next level, which is really important.

And the final stage of a business is really getting to a point where you might want to sell it, and you might sell before you get to a high level of scale because if we're talking about small businesses, many people have sold their businesses, you won't get as much money for it if you're not doing certain revenue numbers, but you can sell it before as long as you have some of the best practices and systems in place, and you have something actually sell. My friend Dan said, he came to speak at an event, and he said to us, when you're selling your company, you're not selling the assets of your company. You're selling your way of doing business, and I think that is the most important thing to remember. You might be selling a design aesthetic or whatever, but no one is ever going to recreate my brain and who I am. If I was ever going to sell a business, it would be based on my way of doing things and getting out into the world, and systems and best practices that I've created to create this level of success. So, you have to remember that. If you want to get to that next stage, whether you want to keep staying in the growth/scale phase and mature your company into a bigger company that is just kind of bringing in cash every month, or if it is something that you eventually want to sell, like all these pieces of the puzzle are really important, and at the end of the day, I think the most important piece when we're trying to build businesses that work for us, instead of the other way around, is us working for businesses is to really be spending a lot of time in your highest level of skill set, like what it is that you're really best at, and a lot of you might think that you're best at designing jewelry, which that might be true, but that's probably not your biggest strength in business because I'm an amazing designer. I can say that now after 25 years. I have designed jewelry that a lot of people have purchased and bought over the last 25 years, and I'm really proud of that, and it's awesome, but I realize that my biggest talent is not necessarily





design. It has a lot more to do with helping people see their full potential and what's possible, and helping them map out the steps to get there. That is what I feel like I'm on this earth and meant to do and also to support visionaries on the quest to really working in their zone of genius, so to speak, for lack of a better word, because that's what I'm really passionate about.

As Robin and I have made these transitions in our lives and our business due to the circumstances that we were being faced with or whatever, it has been really important for us to kind of take a step back and think about what it is that we want, and Robin, I don't want to put words into your mouth, but you were in a place where you really needed to spend some time with your family, and we were trying to navigate how we could create a workload for you that was going to work with that, right?

Robin: Um hmm.

Tracy: That's been something that we've been working towards. My passion is really like not working 24/7 all the time. It's to be able to go out and network and go to events and be around people because I'm such an extrovert. That's really what fuels me and creates inspiration in my life. Travel is a huge part of my life as well, it's something that I'm really excited and passionate about, and so for me, setting up my business in a way that I can leave... I just got back... You are listening to this right after... I think actually I'm probably flying back today. I think I fly back June 3rd/4th from a month-long trip to Europe, where I went to two conferences, and I will report back on how awesome it was, but I went there to spend some time being in a zone of creativity because I want to write a book, and I also want to be focused on the signature idea that I have that I'm trying to create in my life and my business, and it's really important for me to step away and have stakes, and this is how I'm making my businesses work for me. I have my assistant, Sarah, who is able to run my jewelry projects while I'm gone. I trained her really well. She knows what I expect. She came to me today before I got on with you Robin, and she's like, here's what's going on with the opal project... And she knows, and she anticipates. She's following deadlines, everything that I always dreamed it would be, and I haven't had an assistant like that pretty much ever! And it's great! And we have Abby, who is basically running Flourish and Thrive with our team, which is awesome because the two of us work together, she takes my vision. She is my integrator and makes it





happen, and I know that I can leave and the business can still run without me, and it's the best feeling in the world. So for all of you visionaries, I just want to remind you that you could do this too. I think that the things that you need to think about, first and foremost, is to get really clear on what's important to you and what you value and what you want your life to look like. I feel like the reason why people miss the mark and really struggle with this is because they don't have a clear vision of what they want their life to look like.

The second step is to really understand what it's going to take to get there. Who are the people that you need to have in place to be able to support that, and if you leave your business, is it going to stop, if you leave? If you want to take a break or step back because of feelings, is it going to stop? And if you don't want it to stop, we've got to figure out a way to get there together. So, that's sort of how I want to wrap this up. Robin, how would you like to wrap it up? And then I'd like to talk about our birthday gift. How do you feel about that?

Robin: [laughter] I think that sounds great! I think how I'd like to wrap it up is not to be afraid of growth, not to be afraid of change, that with having a business, that's part of the beauty of it, and to embrace it and always check back in with yourself to see where you are and what you want, and that's going to be the biggest thing. I think sometimes we get caught up in the shoulds instead of what our hearts are telling us. We've been able to kind of step back and say, okay, what do I want? Not what should I be doing? Because everyone tells you what you should be doing. [laughter]

Tracy: Exactly!

Robin: So just to really know that there are different phases in business, and there are ups and downs so make sure that you're paying attention to that, and celebrate! Again, celebrate, every phase of business, even if you're totally doing a 180. Make sure you're celebrating because it is amazing to have your own business, and every year should be a celebration.

Tracy: Absolutely, Robin! I agree with you. That is why we're doing it in the first place, and I just want to remind you guys that it's my belief, I really believe this, that there is no security necessarily anymore on getting a job with a big corporation. Entrepreneurship is in most cases the safest route if you're doing it smartly and on to the next step. So we are here to support you in your journey. It takes





courage. It takes grit. It takes gumption to keep moving forward, but I just want to say, you can do it, and I've seen so many of my friends who are starting to age out of their careers and get laid off, and it becomes difficult, and I want you to know that we have so much power in creating our own destiny and creating our own revenue source, and people love jewelry. They love adorning themselves with beautiful things. They love collecting things. That is never going to change, and it will continue forever. Trends may change, market, you know buying patterns may changes, but people are always going to want to adorn themselves with jewelry.

Robin: Thank goodness, right? [laughter]

Tracy: [laughter] And other things too. I think clothing and handbags and all that stuff. This is a personal story, but I have been dating someone, and he keeps complimenting me on my outfits that I'm wearing, and he's like, wow, another cool jacket, and I was like, that's me. That's who I am. It's part of my job to know what's up, and that's how I identify myself, and I feel like there are a lot of people like me who are making a statement with the way that they present themselves in the world is important, and so don't forget that. When you think that, oh, there's not a market for this, because there is, it's just really about you having the courage and the confidence to put yourself out there.

So our birthday gift this year. We have a bunch of birthday gifts. We're going to have a free download. It's going to be a multimedia download that is called "The Visionaries Guide to Creating a Business That Works for You", and this is really about setting up your business in a way that supports your dream, that supports you in the way that you want to get supported. It also helps you kind of think through some of the steps of your different stages in business so that you can get your business working for you instead of being a slave to your business because we don't want that anymore. [laughter] No more of that, regardless of your stage, right Robin?

Robin: Right! Stop being a slave to your biz...

Tracy: And I just want to remind you that we're going to have links to some of the things that we mentioned here. We'll have links to "Laying the Foundation", links to "Multiply Your Profits". Actually, we should probably link all of our courses here so that people know kind of what we actually do here and all of





our programs because we talked about our SOS program, we talked about Diamond Insiders, and all these different groups that we have, and also we're going to have, most importantly, a link to Robin's exclusive wholesale coaching intensive where she is going to be working with you guys. It's a really limited number of people that she's allowing in, so I would definitely connect with Robin because whether you're ready now or you want to think about this later, you need to be in touch with her and get on her waiting list because I know that's going to be sold out in like five seconds. [laughter]

Robin: [laughter]

Tracy: I'm pretty sure about that. I'm confident about that, but we'll give you all the information so you can check it out over at the Show Notes, over at [www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode 156](http://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode156).

And you can grab Flourish and Thrive's birthday gift over at the Show Notes or over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/FTAbday2018.

All right you guys, thanks so much and have an awesome day!

Robin: Thanks, everyone!

