THE POWER OF NO PLAN B: FROM SINGLE MUM TO WILD SUCCESS WITH GEMMA WENT

Welcome back! I'm so excited because we are joined right now by the amazing Gemma Went. She's the founder of GemmaWent.co.uk. She's a multi-six-figure online business consultant. She's worked with incredible organisations and brands like the BBC, Channel 4, Wagamama — the list goes on and on. What's even more amazing is her story. She talks all about how she went from being a single mum pregnant at 7 months to losing her job, and then having to build her own business. She talks all about how she turned it into a wildly successful reality. Her story is amazing. We talk about the emotional journey of being an entrepreneur, the doubts and the worries and how important having determination is and also being consistent. You are going to absolutely going to love it. Also, at the end, she shares her tips for online marketing, so definitely stick around for that. Also, right at the very end, we talk about how you can win a one-on-one, 60-minute strategy session with her, so don't miss it. I hope you enjoy this episode.

Gemma, it's so amazing to have you here! Welcome to the She Means Business podcast.
Ah, thank you so much for having me on.

I am so excited to talk to you about your entrepreneurial journey. We're going to have fun in this podcast. I know I sent you a bunch of questions, of things I was going to ask you, but I've done a complete U-turn on the questions and I'm shaking things up. I know I just asked you this before. We were having a little chit-chat before we started the podcast. I asked Gemma if she had ever seen the movie Joy. You said yes.
Yes.

OK. Obviously, I love that film. I saw it in the cinema when it came out. I don't know about you, maybe I'm weird, but I remember being sat there with my brother and his friend. Obviously, it's the story —if anyone that hasn't seen it— about Joy who had this

dream to start this business. She's in a really tough spot. It's her journey as to how she turned this into a success. There's one part in the movie where all these sales are coming through, it's like this incredible moment of joy, like she's made it happen. I remember feeling like I was going to burst out crying because I felt like I could relate 100% to that feeling, the emotional rollercoaster of being an entrepreneur. Funny enough, I ended up watching it on the plane when I was travelling to California one time. I was travelling on my own and I just started crying. I don't know, did you cry in the movie?
I did. I absolutely connected. It's a wonderful film.

It's so good, isn't it? Today, we are going to be talking all about the made-up movie called She Means Business starring Gemma Went.
I love it.

This movie is going to be an epic story about your life as an entrepreneur and how you've turned your dream into reality or you've got to where you are. First off, we're going to set the scene. What kind of vibe would this movie have? What kind of emotions are depicted, journey of your entrepreneurial adventure, or anything that comes to mind as the vibe of this movie?
The vibe is one of optimism and an absolute hope and faith in the future.

Oh, I like that. It's already sounding like a good movie.
Yeah.

OK, so the movie begins. The first scene starts to play. This is you right back at the beginning of your entrepreneurial journey. What's the story behind why you decided to become an entrepreneur? What's that beginning scene going to be like?
You know what? This movie starts full of emotion actually. It starts with me 7 months pregnant. I am a planned single mother and I find myself jobless. I have run a business before, but at this point, my only choice really was to start up my own business because I couldn't go out and find another job because I'm 7 months pregnant. I'm about to leave

for maternity leave. So yeah, that is the scene. It's me thinking, "Oh my Lord, I've got to set up a business quick and get it out there because I'm a single mum and I don't have any other form of income. I need to start bringing in some income quite soon after my son is born."

How were you feeling and what kind of thoughts did you have running through your head? How did you feel about the prospect of starting a business while you're pregnant?
I was really fearful. Even though I knew the process, I knew how to set up a business. Because my background is digital marketing, I knew I have to put a website together and get it up and do all of those things. However, I was so fearful of being able to do that and juggle being a new mum, having all those hormones, having all of those sleepless nights, and being able to do both of those things well enough —run a business and be a mum— so I started off absolutely fearful. I think quite soon, that turned into hope, optimism and determination because I knew I couldn't stay in that place. I couldn't stay in a place of fear. I just had to keep moving on forward. I had to do it. I had to keep taking action to make it happen because there was no other choice. I had no other income coming in. I had to make this work. Yeah, it was fearful but thankfully, I soon turned into optimism and determination.

At that stage, obviously the work began on it all. What were the first steps you took to set off really?
I created my business. I'm in the UK so I created a UK limited company. The first thing I did and this was while I was still pregnant before my son was born was I created my website. I was really clear on what I wanted to offer. It was all the stuff that I was already doing and knew really easy how to do, so I could easily serve people and do the work. It wasn't going to be something that I had to learn from scratch. I created my website and the next thing I did was I optimised it so that I could be found on Google and other search browsers. That was really important to me. I wanted to get it on there and get that optimised so that by the time I was ready to actually start working, by the time I had my son, my website was somewhere that could be found and I could start bringing

clients in that way. That was my first step. I didn't stop until I was happy with that, till the website was done and I had done the search engine optimisation. And then, off I went to have my son.

Wow. OK, you set up the website and then you had your son. What happened after that?
I had him and I was as mad as a box of frogs, I'll be honest. I was sleep-deprived and just full of hormones. Thankfully, I took a couple of months off. I kept my eye on what was happening with the website and I was tweaking the website and the optimisation. By the time he was 5 months, I was on page 1 of Google and I was being found by people. I took my first client.

They just found you literally through Googling?
Yeah.

Oh wow, that's so impressive.
Yes. For me, it still is one of the most important marketing activities I do for my business because people find me on Google and come to me. By the time they found me and come to me, they're already in a purchasing mindset. They know they need me; it's just a case of making sure we're the right fit and giving them the right service. So yeah, that was really important to me. That meant that I didn't have to do a great deal of marketing. They were automatically coming to me. This was before the days of funnels being really accessible. It was quite expensive in those days to use the technology to create really good marketing and sales funnels. This was kind of my funnel, if you like. That was bringing potential clients to me. I took my first client on and then just kept on growing it from them.

What else was going on at this time? What other things were you trying? What other things were you experiencing as an entrepreneur growing your business at an early phase?

I remember it being so overwhelming because I was juggling so much. Being a single mum, obviously, I was running a house of my own and then running the business. I was juggling and I was really bootstrapping. What I wanted to do was all the income that I was bringing in needed to pay for a roof over our heads and pay for our lives. It wasn't a case of being able to invest anything in the business. I was bootstrapping like mad and scouring Google for hacks that I could do things without actually spending a lot of money on the business. There was a lot of overwhelm. There was a lot of juggling. There were also a lot of joyous days. I was a new mum and that was amazing. The work I was doing was amazing and the clients were really happy. It was just very overwhelming going through that first stage of trying to work out how to make the most of my time and get the most out of that little of time to actually work on the business. There wasn't as much obviously in the early days because I had to look after the baby. Yeah, it was a lot of juggling in those early days.

It's so interesting hearing your story. I think every entrepreneur feels so overwhelmed throughout your entire journey. It's so cyclical. In fact, I was doing an interview with someone and she said, "Every level you get to, there's a new devil waiting for you." You got new challenges. It's not like all of a sudden, you reach this point where it's plain sailing. I don't think you ever do because you always want to grow and expand as an entrepreneur. I remember in the early days feeling so overwhelmed, especially when half the things I didn't know how to do anything. I mean, you have had that. On top of that, single mum, raising your son. What do you think it was that helped you to get through that? Was it just sheer determination? There are so many people that want stuff so badly but they're so in their own way that they can't make it happen. What do you think set you apart?

You know what? I think for me, there was no plan B. There was no other option, so I had to make this work. I was determined to make this work. Within the first year when my son was very young, I was only working one or two days a week and then I built that up over the last few years. Now, I work full-time and he's in nursery. In the first year, I was only working one day and then two days. For me, it was really about being really clear on

the person I wanted to be while I was doing that. So, the person I wanted to be is a mum and the person I wanted to be is a businesswoman. I think it was all that overwhelm and juggling that created that because I kept getting to points where this isn't working. I need to work this out in a way that works for me. How I do this isn't right for everybody. The thing that I've learned working with small business owners is we all have our own way of working. I realised when this was so overwhelming, there was so much going on, and it wasn't working for me, I needed to work out who I needed to be as a mother and as a businesswoman. It didn't work for me doing the work while my son was there. I needed to focus on either being a businesswoman or a mother. I worked out that I needed childcare to be able to do it. How much childcare do I need? How much would that cost? That is my target.

I kept giving myself income goals that would cover rent, food, and everything else that we needed. Also, I needed childcare and I need to bring that income in. I kind of created a plan around that and I was just determined to do it and reach those goals. A lot of it was determination. Then I would say, "Now, I want two days a week. He's a little bit older and I would bring in more money so I could pay for that." It was what drove me on, I think — just a determination to make it happen.

Also, I think when you have no other choice, it just makes it happen. There are no excuses. I could have sat there and made excuses. I could have cried. I could have come up against all of my blocks and all of the things that still show up for me, but I didn't have that choice. I just kept on going really.

I love that. Determination is so powerful, isn't it? Seriously, it can just create the most amazing things if we're so determined. What has been the biggest or the best way to really get yourself out there? I know you talked about search engine optimisation and being able to be found on Google. Is there anything else that's really helped you to get your business out there and create this success?

Yeah, absolutely. Obviously, I'm really lucky that I already knew how to do digital marketing. I was all over social media. I was doing all the digital marketing things that you should it, but I think it's not about that. I don't think it's about with your email marketing. I think it's about showing up every day, creating a plan, understanding where you need to be to connect with your people, understanding your people, and then just showing up every single day. Showing people that you're good at what you do, proving your expertise to people, and constantly taking action. I really believe it's that. Whatever platforms you choose as a business owner, whether it is a few social media platforms and then email marketing or whatever it is that works for your business, it's about being consistent and showing up every day, proving your worth, showing people that they can trust you, and building those relationships with people. I think that's the thing that really brings about success. It's just consistency in doing it. I've met some of the most talented digital marketers, but if they don't show up every day and do it, they're not going to get any results. I've seen some people that aren't particularly talented at it, but they do it every single day who get the most amazing results. I really believe it's that.

Yeah. I talk about that so much in the book. There's an entire section about showing up for your dreams. We're the only ones that can show up for our dreams and make it happen. You're right, day in and day out. I always say success is not an accident; it's something you create every day by showing up, by doing the things you need to do. I was answering some questions last night. One of them was all about how to really create a successful business. It's largely a case of keeping on going. You have to keep going. You have to stay consistent, like you said. You have to keep showing up. That's the only way. No one has all the answers in the beginning. We don't even have all the answers and we've been doing it for awhile.

Exactly. I think it's just understanding that you will have those dips in it and you will have days when you want to hide under your duvet and binge on Netflix. You've got to keep pushing yourself forward. A little trick that I learned —I can't remember where I learned this from— and I think it might have been in Lucky Bitch Boot Camp, which I am a part of. Someone was talking about focusing on the future you. When you're thinking about

your business goals, and your goals are in 1, 5 and 10 years' time, right? Focus on what that person would do. What would Gemma be in 5 years' time? How would she be acting? What would she be doing if she's achieved all those goals? I use that sometimes as a little mindset trick when I'm having those down days and I think "I just want to read a book" or "I want to binge on Netflix," I always say to myself, "What would future Gemma do?" I think about the Gemma that's successful in 5 years' time, who's done all of those things that I want to achieve and is earning this much money, would she be doing that or would she be doing something else? That helps me push forward and take that action even when I don't feel like it.

Yeah. Something like that is so powerful, isn't it? I call it my bag of mindset magic tricks.
Love it.

I was doing a session yesterday with the members and we did Vision Letter 2017. It was a letter to yourself from the future. It's like travelling into the future to the end of the year to find out all the things you achieved. The next part was all about writing down tips your future self would say to you right now to help you have an amazing year. It was really interesting because I asked people to share the tips they were sharing with themselves from the future. There were loads of great ones, but the one that really sticks out said, "I love you." I love that she said that to herself because I think when we take a step back, you can get perspective when you think of what your future self would want you to do right now? It helps you shift perspective so quickly. To have that written down or to do those kinds of exercises where you can read something you've written to yourself that says, "I love you. You can do this. Keep going. Keep doing what you need to do," it's so empowering especially during those days and moments when we're like "Oh, this isn't going to work out" and you cry all day.
I love that. That's really powerful — "I love you."

Isn't it? You're talking about how it's all too easy for us to beat ourselves up and to get annoyed and frustrated with ourselves when we mess up and everything. The thing I love

about being an entrepreneur is how much it forces you to grow, how much you change as a person and becoming a better version of yourself because you are showing up. You are expanding your mind. I love it.

It's amazing. The things we learn about ourselves and others every step of the way of this entrepreneurial journey, it's fascinating. I love it. I feel exactly the same way about it.

I do. It's like going down the rabbit hole of this entrepreneurial world. The more you go down there and the more you learn and you let your mind expand, the more you realise it's possible. "Wow, my life can become the most magical and dreamlike life if I just create it that way." With every entrepreneur I've spoken to, it's more about the personal growth and development that enables them to grow their businesses. It's like that side of things changes your life and transforms everything. When you set goals and you then hit those goals, you think about how grateful you are. You just think about how to create more happiness in your life. So, it goes beyond the business really. That's one of the things I've learned about running my businesses. Anyway, going back to your story, you had an interesting, dramatic beginning. You've been consistent and got to where you are now. Getting into the best part of the movie here, your dreams are becoming a reality. What is your life like now?

My life is amazing, actually. I feel like I lead a really blessed life. It's fabulous. Just after my son turned one, I met the man of my dreams who proposed on Christmas Day.

Congratulations! How exciting!

I met him, which was just wonderful. A year ago, I moved in with him. We just happen to find my dream house right in the middle of the countryside in Worcestershire. I have all the things I've always wanted in a house. I have my own office here. My son goes to nursery literally 10 minutes away. It's a wonderful nursery, so he goes there full-time and I run my business from here in my lovely office. It's an amazing life. I love my business. I love the clients that I work with. I love all the people that I get to collaborate with. It's just fantastic. But it's not like I've reached this and that's it. OK, what's the next step? You know this as an entrepreneur. There's always a next stage. There's always a next thing. So

I'm now looking at the next thing that I want to do, how I'm going to grow this business and potentially grow into other areas as well and how I can grow as a person, as you've said. I'm hugely into personal development as well. This 3-year journey has been fascinating for me in the personal development area. I'm going to continue to learn and to grow and see where I end up after this.

It's so amazing. It's like your life has completely flourished.
Yeah, it's fun.

To close out the movie, let close with a profound statement by sharing the biggest lesson that you've learned throughout your journey. What would that be?
Ooh, that's a tricky one. You know what? The biggest lesson is to trust yourself. I've been plagued with self-doubt all the way along this journey. I think I will always be. The thing I've learned from other entrepreneurs is we're all the same. We all get to points where we doubt ourselves and wonder "Am I right here? Is this the thing for me? Am I doing the right thing?" Every time I felt that, I explored it or I've stopped and I was always right in the first place. It's just fears and blocks that are holding me back. My biggest lesson was to trust myself more and go with what I initially thought because my intuition is quite right most of the time. That's my biggest lesson.

I love that. To me, trust is such a massive word. It's on my vision board to remind me whenever I see my big, scary goals. My logical brain is like "Ha, that's ridiculous!" No, I'm just going to trust that somehow this is all going to work out. It's going to work out for the greatest good.
Yeah, absolutely. I love that.

You'd go insane wouldn't you if you didn't. You're right — you are clouded with doubt so often. You're trying to do things you've never done so you're constantly having these challenges and obstacles pop up. If you don't trust, I'd just go mad.
Yeah, totally.

Anyway, that movie was epic. It needs to come out in the cinemas soon. We all need to go and watch it. It's so inspiring because I feel like it just goes to show what is possible. You can turn around situations in your life that are perhaps, not the most favourable and can turn into an amazing life. You can flourish like you have. It's really interesting to see how you've done it. From hearing what you've said, so much of it comes back down to who we are as individuals and having that determination and being consistent. That is all on us. It's not just the skill and the talent. Sure, that plays a part, but it's who we are as people that enables us to really thrive in business and in life.
Absolutely.

Also, as you are a digital marketing expert, I didn't want to end this without asking you what your top advice would be for entrepreneurs in terms of online marketing.
OK. I think my main piece of advice is to really, truly understand your people or your target audience, although I prefer to call them people. Really understand them and understand where they hang out online. Once you know that, that's just where you need to be.

That's really good. It's very true as well. I like how you call them people.
Yeah, it's people; it's not a target audience.

Just before we wrap up, I nearly forgot about this, but we also have a lightning round. There are a few sentences I'll start.
Okie dokie.

Are you ready?
Yeah, I'm ready.

OK. The first one is when I face a big challenge, I...
Take a deep breath and keep moving forwards.

If I could go back in time to when I started my business, I would tell myself...
Not to worry so much. Everything you need is already inside you. Trust yourself.

My favourite business tool, resource, book or podcast is...
The book Get Rich, Lucky Bitch by Denise Duffield-Thomas. I later bought her course.

That's so cool. Finally, what is your favourite quote?
Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind always.

I love that!
My favourite quote — I love it.

I love that so much. The world would be a more magnificent place if everyone were to be kind.
You know what? That's so relevant to me with online stuff because the online world can be brutal. People can be quite harsh where they're in social media platforms or in groups. You forget that you're actually speaking to other human beings. I try to teach that to everyone. Just remember that you're dealing with people and remember that phrase.

I think it's so important. I was doing a live session the other day. Someone had said how someone had been really nasty to them. They didn't know what to do and they were so angry. Send them some love back. If someone is mean or says nasty things, I just let go of it and think to myself — sometimes, it's hard I will admit — I'm going to send as much love as possible and as much kindness. It makes me feel instantly better.
Absolutely. It would be a nice place online if we were all nicer to each other.

It would, wouldn't it? It would be lovely. One day...
Yes, indeed.

Anyway, thank you so much for taking the time to do this podcast. It's been so much fun. I loved it!

Thank you. I really enjoyed it. Thank you so much for having me on.

You have a great story. Everyone, definitely go and check out Gemma Went on her website. I'll leave all the details in the show notes so have a look over there. Also, on a very, very exciting note, you can win a chance of winning a one-hour strategy session with Gemma, which would be amazing. All you need to do is leave a comment over on the blog and just let us know what your biggest take-away from this podcast episode has been. I will see you next week for another episode of She Means Business.