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Butter *AND* Beast

Inspirational Stories & Recipes to Feed
the Entrepreneurial Mind, Body & Soul

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Believe in Yourself

by Bonita Richter



The year is 1991.

Bonita Richter, one of the owners and finance manager for Troutman Industries Inc., studied the financial statements and sales backlog report for the family-owned CNC precision machine shop.

It was the second straight month of a loss. Sales were trending down, and the dollar value of the backlog of work was quickly eroding.

Typically, the company was fortunate to have work booked to meet sales four to five months ahead. But new purchase orders that had once flowed from customers had turned into a trickle.

“The recession has finally hit our company.” Bonita thought.

As she looked at the numbers, a pit of fear grew in her stomach. “We need new orders because we’re burning too much cash. The way future sales look, we’ll lose \$30,000 to \$40,000 a month, and the economy is still in a recession with no signs of easing up.”

Bonita knew her father, Gerald (“Jerry”) Troutman, president and founder of the company, would be concerned when she reported the financial results to him for the month. But she wasn’t afraid.

“He’s always so calm.” Bonita thought. “He’ll know what to do.” Thinking about her father and how he handled things gave her a sense of relief.

The recession wasn’t a surprise.

For months, the company had been receiving liquidation sale notices of other companies. Companies that were going out of business.

So many notices came in the mail each day that Bonita’s father had started saving them in a box. To him, it was a daily reminder to be grateful for how fortunate his company was, as well as to stay sharp and keep running a tight operation. Troutman had a strong balance sheet. But not for long if changes weren’t made.

There was no denying it was a scary time.

Operating a CNC job shop like Troutman was very capital intensive. There were many overhead costs. With 42 employees and two buildings to support, wages, insurance, utilities, maintenance, and state-of-the-art CNC machine tools, costs were steep. Just to break even the company needed to generate a minimum of \$150,000 sales each month.

“Talk about stress,” Bonita thought. “It’s times like these that makes being in business not so enjoyable.”

Her thoughts went to the staff. “What if we have to lay off employees? What about their families? How will they be able to pay their bills?”

Wages for the machinists were the company’s largest expense. It would make sense to cut some of it, being there was barely enough work to keep the machinists busy.

Normally, they operated the sophisticated, high-speed equipment. Now, they were being assigned odd jobs and tasks, like running errands, waxing and polishing the tiled floors of the shop, and even putting a fresh coat of paint on the walls. Soon, there would be no odd jobs left to do.

Bonita thought about the steps they'd already taken to manage costs. Yet, additional action had to happen to stop the company from bleeding cash. Otherwise, they'd risk going out of business.

It was time to make more tough decisions.

Bonita got up from her desk and walked into Jerry's office. They needed to discuss the growing critical situation.

The next day, Jerry called a meeting of the company owners: himself, his brother David, and two daughters Patty, and Bonita.

A sense of apprehension fell over everyone as they sat down at the oval boardroom table. The purpose of the meeting was to decide the company's next steps so it would remain in business, and avoid becoming another casualty of the recession.

Many options were laid on the table and discussed:

- Laying off employees (the most logical option).
- Decreasing work week hours from 45 to 30.
- Selling assets to bolster cash balances.
- Looking again to see if any more operating expenses could be cut, and other creative ideas.

The family weighed the pros and cons of each option. Jerry listened intently, carefully considering what was being discussed.

Then he spoke. He'd decided.

Bonita was told to schedule a mandatory meeting for all employees.

Two days later, as employees filtered into the second floor meeting room in the Portland Avenue building, Bonita could see the concern on their faces.

They knew the purpose of the meeting was to talk about the lack of work, and how the company planned to deal with it.

Naturally, they feared the worst. Rumors of layoffs had been triggered by the meeting notice.

“To keep trust, morale and productivity intact it’s important we are having this meeting.” Bonita thought to herself.

Jerry took his place at the front of the room, put the first transparency on the projector, and began explaining what was going to happen to the group.

The decisions shared that day were pivotal in changing the company’s future trajectory.

Key actions the company took that day:

Wages were cut by 15% for salaried employees. This included the owners of the company, as well as managerial staff, including the quality control, production, and engineering managers. This would decrease overhead expenses.

Requests for quotes were to be priced to break even, and not a dollar more. This would price work at a level to be attractive to customers. It would also cover overhead and variable expenses, and not put the company in a financial loss position.

Wage-earning machinist employees would be kept fully employed. They would take part in training and development classes to learn about new tooling technologies, total quality management, and other subjects to build their skills. This action would increase the company’s competitive strength.

Even though laying off the machinist workforce was the most logical place to decrease expenses (and the action many other CNC job shops were taking), Jerry chose not to lay off because skilled machinists were short in supply. Risking losing these highly valued employees was unacceptable to him.

The company would invest in capital equipment. Even though there wasn’t enough work for the company’s existing equipment, almost-new, state-of-the-art machine tools would be purchased that were being sold at liquidation “going out of business” auctions. This equipment could be purchased at a value of pennies on the dollar for what had been paid.

To say the employees were elated and excited about the direction of the company was an understatement!

Instead of cowering behind the recession, Jerry, David, Patty, and Bonita decided to courageously face it head on, with Jerry at the helm.

Each of these bold actions would put them in a strong position when the recession ended to capitalize on the expanding economy.

Even though Jerry didn't have a crystal ball to see the future to help him make these decisions, what he had was foresight, courage, and unwavering faith. He knew the recession would end, because he'd been through them before during his thirty-plus years of being an entrepreneur.

He knew if he made the right decisions, the company would not only survive the recession – but thrive after it broke.

He was right. Between 1992 and 2002 (when the family sold the company), sales grew at a double-digit rate every year, in an industry where the average company grew only two to three percent per year.

The year is 2014.

I'm reflecting back on that experience. A deep sense of appreciation washes over me as I think about how blessed I am to have had Jerry as both my father, and most influential business mentor in my life.

He taught me how to brilliantly and masterfully guide a company through extremely challenging financial times.

Most of all, he demonstrated to me how to have a clear vision for a desired future, how to take calculated risks, and to have an unwavering faith and belief in myself.

Thank you, Dad, for what you've taught me about being a person of integrity, forward thinking, and how to be a leader.

The way I live my life, and “do what I do” to help others succeed in business is because of what I learned from you.

To celebrate and honor your memory, I'm sharing your favorite recipe: Chocolate Drop Cookies. They're delicate, decadent, rich bites of chocolate that are sure to satisfy any chocolate lover's cravings!



About the Author

Bonita Richter, MBA is an award-winning business expert and is passionate about empowering women to lead their lives on their own terms through successful entrepreneurship.

For more than 30 years, Bonita was leader at a 50-employee manufacturing firm her family owned for 42 years. While serving as Director of a Small Business Development Center, she personally mentored and taught over 8,000 small business owners on various business growth and management topics. She has a business degree from The Pennsylvania State University and Executive MBA from the Lake Forest Graduate School of Management. You can find her online at bonitarichter.com.

Chocolate Drop Cookies



Yield: About 2 dozen cookies

Ingredients

1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 cup cocoa
1-1/3 cup flour
3 tsp. baking powder
1/4 lb. butter
1 cup light brown sugar
1 egg
2/3 cup whole or low fat milk
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

In a small bowl, mix the dry ingredients with a metal whisk.

With a mixer, cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Whisk the egg with a fork. Add it to the butter and sugar mixture and blend. Add the milk and vanilla and mix just until blended.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients in the bowl. Mix by hand (do not over mix).

Let the cookie dough sit and rise for ten minutes. (Important! Or your cookies will flatten out too much when baked.)

Using a spoon, scoop up a small amount of cookie dough. Then, with a second spoon, carefully push the dough onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper, keeping the cookies about 2" apart.

Bake for about 5 minutes until the edges and top of the cookies are starting to firm up and have lost their glossiness. When baked, these cookies will be about the size of a quarter.

Do not over bake.

Cool on a wire rack or clean kitchen towel. Store in an airtight container.

How I Learned To Truly See My Value

by Miki DeVivo



I'm a photographer.

For a while there though, I wasn't.

And then for a while I was, but didn't feel I could claim that title.

But now?

Now I'm a photographer. No ifs, ands, or buts.

A few months after my daughter was born, I was taking some pictures of her for a thank you note, and a strange thing happened — I saw her clearly for what felt like the first time.

See the first few months of her life were particularly challenging for me. I felt like I had to be perfect all the time, like I should always be better. I felt overwhelmed, full of anxiety that I wouldn't be able to help her the next time she cried. And all that pressure I put on myself made it nearly impossible for me to enjoy simply being with her in the moment.

But that day, camera in hand, my anxiety melted away. As I looked at her through the viewfinder, all the ways I thought I was failing disappeared. I saw her true self, her pure spirit smiling back at me.

In so many ways parenting can be an anti-flow activity. But seeing her, experiencing our relationship photographically, helped me access that feeling of flow again. It had been so long since I felt right. Feeling it then, feeling that I was going to be ok, that I was already ok, felt so sweet.

Inspired by this feeling of connection and flow, a few months later I decided to hang out my shingle as a family photographer.

I had no idea what I was doing artistically or business-wise. All I knew was that taking pictures made me feel good. And that the pictures I took made other people feel good too. And I thought that would be enough.

It wasn't.

People were into the photography part for sure.

But the paying for it part? Not so much.

Over and over again, when it came to the money bits, things went sideways fast.

Like many artists, I had very conflicting feelings tied up in charging for my work. I wanted to be paid. But I didn't know how to put a number on it. I wanted to be taken seriously. But I didn't take myself seriously.

And when I did put a dollar value on my work? People were surprised and angry at how \$15 prints could add up so quickly. (Yup. My first print prices were \$15. Industry standard? At least \$45.) And that took me by surprise, because how could they not know what a sweet deal they were getting?

Because I had no idea how to position myself as an artist, people couldn't see how I was different from all the other "moms with cameras" out there.

Because I had no idea how to position myself as a business, there was a huge gap between what I was charging and what people thought my work was worth.

I had no unique selling proposition, no value proposition. No solid foundation from which to communicate the value of my work. I was operating on the blind faith that if they liked my pictures, they'd be happy to pay for them. But as we all know, that's not really how business works.

People didn't know my value, couldn't know my value, because I didn't know my value.

I remember my first sales session.

The mom loved the pictures and wanted to buy a whole bunch of 4x6s for an album (because I had failed to explain to her that I could design a beautiful archival album for her. She thought she was going to stick them in the plastic sleeves of her three-ring binder.) And then we totaled up the cost. With tax. It came to somewhere in the \$400 range. I was excited about my first sale.

She was outraged. So we narrowed her order down to a number that she could stomach.

I was devastated.

Why didn't she know that photography is an investment? Why didn't she value my work enough to pay for it?

And the question underneath it all, why didn't she value me?

I felt so awkward and ashamed.

I wish I could say that I learned my lesson and that every client after that was smooth sailing.

But I didn't. And it wasn't.

Instead of facing my personal and professional hang-ups around money and value, I tried to just plow forward. I ignored the issues, to the point where I began to sabotage myself. So much so that for one client I accidentally on purpose “forgot” to send the rate sheet until after I had photographed and edited TWO sessions for them. And even after I sent it, I didn’t know if they’d looked at it or not.

I had such a rapport with them. It was the first in-home session I’d ever done. It was intimate and tender. We just clicked. And their images reflected this connection. It was the strongest work I had done up to that point, and even now when I look at the images I can see the beginnings of what has become my signature style.

And all of this was ruined because they believed that a CD with their digital negatives was included in their sitting fee just as it was in the package offered by their wedding photographer. But it wasn’t. I tried to offer a compromise. They were unwilling. I decided to give them the CD, but the damage was done on both sides. I was devastated. Again.

After that, I did get some help. But the person was unfamiliar with my local market, so the rates she encouraged me to charge were far above what my market could bare.

Not only that, and probably more significantly, my confidence couldn’t support those numbers either. I never made the mistake of not sending my rates in advance again, but now clients disappeared as soon as they saw them.

So I stopped. I stopped trying to get it “right.” I stopped trying to convince people. I stopped looking outward. And for a while, I stopped photographing, too.

And then one night we were out to dinner with my husband’s friend from college and she said, “So, you’re a photographer?”

“Eh,” I replied. “The whole industry is kinda pissing me off right now. What I really want to do is just photograph people hanging out at home with their

families. I'm not into that whole white-t-shirt-and-jeans-in-front-of-the-waterfall thing."

"That sounds awesome," she said. "I'd totally love that."

"You know, I suppose if that's really what I want to do, then I should tell people that's what I do."

This conversation was a huge eye-opener for me. Up until that point, I thought that because I couldn't fit into the standard business model, that photography was just closed to me. But it still took me a while to accept that doing it my way, following my own vision, was really possible.

I had a lot of self-doubt. A lot of second guessing. It took me about a month to finally accept that it was possible to actually do it that way, to accept that it was my business and therefore I could shape it to be anything I wanted. That I could design my product and my pricing to look and work the way I wanted it to. And not only could I do that, but that that's what having a business is all about.

And to have the confidence that my vision is valuable.

But one day, the spinning was just too much. I needed to take action. So I just decided. I made the commitment.

I stopped doing sessions for families that were looking for that one perfect, showcase image of everyone in matching clothes smiling at the camera to hang above the fireplace.

I started doing intimate, relaxed sessions of families at home in their pjs making pancakes in the messy kitchen and reading stories to each other among the laundry piles. People living, and loving, and being real with each other, with me.

I stopped doing sales sessions that reduced relationships and emotional connections to dollars and colored ink on paper.

I started to value my work, my time, and my vision. I put one flat number to the value and then included everything a family could want in that one

complete package. Rather than following the standard industry template, I made it a number that I could say with absolute confidence was worth every penny. I got what I needed. They got what they needed.

I realized that my business didn't have to follow the rules of the industry.

Business as usual was not my calling.

As soon as I stopped trying to copy how other people did it, as soon as I let go of the stress and the anxiety of “getting it right,” my own style was free to emerge. And that freed me to finally have confidence in my value.

Because I was charting my own path, it took me a few years to really narrow in on what I do and why I do it. I had had an innate sense of it from the very beginning, but it took time to figure out how to express it in just the right way.

But now? Now I *know*.

I can claim the title. I can claim my value.

I am a photographer. I am a teacher. I am a camera evangelist.

I create positive shifts in families through photography.

I believe that a camera can change your life.

We all want to be seen.

Photo Credit: Miki DeVivo

About the Author



It's true. Miki does awesome things. You can find her at thelovelynow.com.

Brown Butter Cranberry Streusel Shortbread Bars

(adapted from Fine Cooking)



Crust/Streusel

1 cup plus 5 tablespoons (10 1/2 oz) unsalted butter
1 cup sugar, divided
3/4 teaspoon salt
2 large egg yolks
3 cups plus 3 tablespoons (14 1/4 oz) all-purpose flour

Filling

12 oz (about 2 cups) fresh or frozen cranberries
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon orange zest
1/4 cup water

To make the crust:

Line a 13×9-inch metal baking pan with foil, leaving an overhang on opposing sides so you can lift the bars out after baking. Spray the pan and foil with nonstick cooking spray.

Add the butter to a medium saucepan set over medium-low heat. Melt the butter, swirling the pan frequently. Once the butter has melted, it will start to bubble and foam. Continue to cook (continuing to swirl the pan) until the butter turns brown and smells nutty – be patient and watch carefully, it can go from brown to burned quickly. Turn off the heat under the pan, and let the butter cool until lukewarm.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the butter, 3/4 cup of the sugar, and the salt. Beat in the egg yolks. Use a rubber spatula to stir in the flour until completely incorporated. The dough will be thick and stiff. Transfer about 2 cups to the prepared pan and press into an even layer in the bottom of the pan. Prick the dough all over with a fork, then chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, or until firm.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 325 F.

Bake the crust for about 20 minutes, or until it begins to set, but has not yet started to brown around the edges.

While the crust bakes, make the streusel by combining the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar with the reserved dough. Use your fingers to mix until crumbly. Also use this time to make the cranberry filling. Combine the cranberries, sugar, orange zest and water in a medium saucepan, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-high, and continue boiling until the mixture is thick and syrupy (most of the cranberries will have popped), about 5-8 minutes. Turn off the heat, and let cool for 5-10 minutes.

Spread the cranberry mixture in an even layer over the hot crust. Sprinkle the streusel over the top. Increase the oven temperature to 350 F, and bake on a rack placed in the top of the oven for about 25 minutes, or until the streusel is golden. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and cool for at least 1 hour (you can also cool in the fridge if you want to speed up the process). Once cool, use the foil handles to lift the bars out. Place on a cutting board, and cut into squares before serving. Store for up to a week in an airtight container at room temperature.

The Truth About Light Bulb Moments

by Carole Murko



Do a-ha moments actually happen?

I think they do (but not like a lightning strike).

I've been on a lifelong journey toward my a-ha moment.

I had a multi-year career in financial services and even earned the coveted CFA (chartered financial analyst).

In my heart, I knew from day one that I was on the wrong path. The problem was I didn't quite know how to access the part of me that would allow me to *be* me. That is, in a work capacity.

I even remember saying, "I don't know what I want to be when I grow up, but at least I'll make some money."

Don't get me wrong. During those years I was always taking classes, networking, and thinking. I knew I'd figure it out.

When I finally left financial services I actually started a company called Dodo Unlimited.

I created a brand using the dodo bird to symbolize the idea that your individualism shouldn't become extinct — Dare to be different.

I wrote two kids books, designed a hand puppet, and a full line of dodo-branded extensions.

Unfortunately, I was undercapitalized and had to move on.

At the time, I was helping a friend decorate their new condo and assisted them with the construction management.

A partial a-ha happened.

I simultaneously enrolled in design school and began advertising for decorating clients.

I had the good fortune of a great network and a well-developed sense of style, so client acquisition was relatively easy.

What I didn't plan for or anticipate was how different it was selling curtains versus selling complex financial services to Fortune 100 treasurers.

My pedigree and experience in financial services provided an instant level of respect. In home decorating, we play in a much more emotional sandbox, often acting as psychoanalysts to both husbands and wives. I learned this once I got into their underwear drawers – all behaviors got weird.

When I moved to the “country” (Stockbridge, Massachusetts to be exact), I continued my decorating business and added real estate sales to the mix.

And now I was officially miserable.

But being an achievement oriented, non-quitter, I persevered.

Then I met Carole Hyatt, a wonderful woman who runs a workshop called *Getting to Next*.

It's designed for women who are trying to move up the ladder in their current job, re-enter the workforce after maternity leave or find their passion. Designed to reduce you to your core values, the workshop does just that.

So, while one would like to think the a-ha moment is actually a moment... It's really a lifetime leading to a moment.

I discovered what I already knew deep inside: my core values are that I love to cook, I love my family, and I love to entertain.

Now while one might find those three things very vague, they weren't to me – they were part of my fabric, my life's context.

I'd always secretly envied Martha Stewart. And now I knew I had to figure how to create my own empire!

After a year of soul-searching, research and happenstance, I came up with the idea of Heirloom Meals.

I have no children of my own but I have great recipes and stories that I like to share. I imagined a platform to share and encourage others to preserve their tried and true recipes and stories. But, mostly, I envisioned a TV show.

The Launch

To me, Heirloom Meals was destined to be a TV series where we shared the stories and recipes of our guests.

And, as a big thinker, I went straight to the head of the class.

I networked and found a lifestyle TV producer who loved the Heirloom Meals concept and helped me produce a five-minute demo reel.

We brought it to public television. They loved it. And they gave us a letter of interest to produce a 26-episode series.

There was a catch, tho'. Public television doesn't provide funding; they only provide the "airwaves."

With plan and proposal in hand, I attempted to raise \$1.6 million to produce the series in 2009. (A special year in our global economy!)

While I procured many meetings and accolades for my idea, I raised the sum total of zero, nach, nada, zilch, the doughnut hole.

What I learned during that process was that I needed to develop the foundation for Heirloom Meals.

I needed an identity, a website, a point of view.

So, I started the blog, developed the brand, and then raised money through a Kickstarter fundraiser to build a legitimate website.

I also stumbled into producing a radio show on a local NPR station, which was pure providence.

I was (and still am) producing a weekly radio show, blogging most days and continuing to establish my brand.

I even took a personal branding workshop, which really helped me think about how to convey what it is I'm doing.

And trust me, I stumbled through many a meeting, cocktail party and email exchange trying to easily define what THAT was/is.

I was too wordy. I was apologetic. I was nervous. I wasn't owning my space.

And, then all of the sudden, as I got deeper and deeper into the evolution of Heirloom Meals (and trying to understand what it was that I was "selling"), I finally landed on my message, my mission, my *raison d'être*:

Heirloom Meals is a storytelling platform that uses the radio (NPR), television (so far 2 one-hour public television specials), and the web (heirloommeals.com) to share our deep connection to our ancestral foods and treasured family recipes. Food is the great connector—it connects us to our past and is the bridge to our future.

By bringing peoples' stories to light, I've learned how family and community are really where all change happens. There's no better expression of love than making meals from scratch with real food for and with your family and friends.

Heirloom Meals provides a positive and uplifting message about family, community, and the importance of eating local, seasonal foods.

Now what?

So, while on the surface I've been extremely successful with launching a dream job, I haven't mentioned that I'm still doing interior decorating to pay my bills.

Heirloom Meals is still a capital consumer. Every step of the way there are expenses.

Take trademarking, for instance. One might think, you apply, pay your fees, you're trademarked.

Not so. You actually then have to prove you are using it in a way that satisfies the trademark police. Hence I've had to pay more money to file for an extension every six months that it doesn't get used in one of the ways that I imagined it originally.

For the most part, I work every day, seven days a week. There are times when my mind and body suggest that it's not sustainable.

It's during those times that I've had to take a step back.

I've also become very spiritual about the process – looking for signs.

In fact, I'd taken some time away from Heirloom Meals last spring because I didn't really know what my next steps were.

When I least expected, I received an email from Pete and Gerry's Heirloom Eggs. They were curious to know whether I was still pursuing doing a show on public television. I told them I was, but had a difficult time raising the money. They said I should consider doing a one-off, hour-long special. Thanksgiving, perhaps?

All the stars aligned.

I had recently met a cinematographer with whom I wanted to work, so I called a couple of other companies and asked if they would take a shot as a sponsor.

Within six weeks of the first conversation with Pete and Gerry's, I was filming my first ever Heirloom Meals public television special.

Through this process, I've learned to ask directly for what I need, or for what I think I need to move forward.

I'm also a relentless networker. If I send an email or make a phone call and don't get a response – I just do it again until I get one!

Although it may seem trite, passion and heart are what keep me going.

Everything about Heirloom Meals feels right to me.

And the saying, "90% of life is just showing up," is true.

There are times that I think I need my head examined – that I'm crazy to think I can pull this off.

But my staying power is starting to show signs that the tortoise *does* win the race.

I've produced two nationally televised one-hour public television specials. I have blog sponsors, a book proposal, and I've officially declared 2015 as the year to bring Heirloom Meals from a "friends and family" business to a small business with revenue streams.

It's not easy. But it's worth it!

About the author



Carole is a culinary artist who learned how to cook by observing her mother and grandmother since she was three years old. Throughout her life, she's captured their passion for cooking, entertaining, and feeding friends and family, and translated it into her own special way of honoring the traditions she loved as a child by creating Heirloom Meals. Carole hosts a weekly radio show called Heirloom Meals Radio, a storytelling show she created to share treasured family recipes, stories, and tips...“savoring yesterday's traditions today,” on NPR. She regularly appears as a food expert and demo chef on Newschannel 13, Albany, NY's NBC affiliate. Find her online at heirloommeals.com.

Heirloom 5-Ribbed Roast



This is easy and it's worth it!

As far back as I can remember, we had Rib Roast for Christmas. It was the crown jewel of beef...juicy, indulgent and that special treat that made our Christmas dinner amazing! My grandfather was a butcher so he was particularly involved in selecting the beef. Mom and Nana always made roast beef with mustard, but they added rosemary and garlic to the rib roast. Imagine the aroma of the beef, garlic and rosemary. It promises to tantalize you for the 3 hours it is in the oven. It lured us to the kitchen with the question, "When will it be ready?" And when it was ready, no one went hungry or disappointed.

Ingredients

2 Tbsp Olive Oil

Salt and Pepper

1/3 Cup Dijon Mustard

6-8 Garlic Cloves, minced

3 Tbsp Rosemary, minced

Instructions

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Place rib roast in roasting pan, fat side up. Rub olive oil over beef and sprinkle with salt and pepper to your liking. Spread mustard over beef and then press the garlic and rosemary into the mustard to form a crust.

Place in center of heated oven and roast for 15 minutes. Lower temperature to 325 degrees and cook for another 2-3 hours or until the middle of the roast is 130 degrees – this will insure that you have a spectrum of “well-doneness” – from well done on the ends, to medium rare in the middle.

Take out of oven and remove from pan to your cutting board. Let rest for 20-30 minutes while you finish your sides.

Serves 10 people.

Tip: When you order the rib roast, ask your butcher to cut the meat off the bone and tie it back on. This will make it really easy to carve when it's done. Just cut the butcher string and you can carve the meat without struggling with the bones. If anyone wants a bone – they can have one. I save mine and use them to make a beef stock for French Onion Soup.

The Vehicle for My Business Butter

by Janelle Hardy



My father's love of butter was famous.

So much so, that at his funeral, a friend and colleague described, in lavish detail, the way that my dad would slather his bread with butter. Or his muffin. To be honest, anything resembling bread would have butter on it.

Because of that I assume that I got my favourite phrase “bread is just a vehicle for butter” from my father, but in reality, I can’t remember where I first heard it.

What I do know is that anytime I encounter butter, and something to smear it on, those words come out of my mouth like a chant, like a mantra.

‘Bread is just a vehicle for butter.’ It’s an ode to all things silky, oily and delicious.

I love butter as deeply as my father did, with a passion that seeks out cultured butter and other fancy varieties, and I take just as much pleasure in consuming it.

I've been first an accidental, then an intentional solopreneur for about 10 years now.

I fell into contract work by necessity – fresh from a Master's degree, on my own with a 2 year old, I simply couldn't find any steady work when I returned to my hometown.

But I could cobble together enough various contracts to approximate a full time job with just enough money to pay my bills.

This went on for a while, until I got training as a Hellerwork Structural Integration therapist (fixing posture with deep-tissue massage and movement lessons), and hung out my shingle as a healer seven years ago.

Most recently, along with doing Structural Integration, I've been carving out space online as an embodied creative – using storytelling, art and my knowledge of the body to bring people an experience of physicality, intimacy and creative connection.

Which brings me back to butter. And it's vehicle.

I wonder often, in this ongoing work of being a small business owner at the smallest scale of me, myself and I, what is the bread, and what is the butter of my business?

The butter must be the exquisite beauty, the most sensual, joyful and gratifying of my experiences.

I am still smitten by the memory of a certain and very specific butter, tasted the first week my father was diagnosed with cancer, in a fancy, now defunct restaurant in Vancouver.

It was about eight years and 6 months ago that this butter from New Brunswick, Canada, created a sublime experience in my mouth approaching the divine. I'm quite certain my eyes rolled back in my head, and a slight and muted moan escaped me as that butter melted on my tongue.

The butter, then, is seeing the lightbulbs in clients' eyes as they connect the dots between their problems and my solutions.

It's the feedback about my devotional paintings – about how accurate, how healing, how beyond-anything-I-could-have-imagined perfect everything in it was for that specific person.

It's the gratitude I receive when someone is finally freed of their physical and emotional pain, and can feel more at ease in their bodies and hearts.

It's the overwhelming bubbles of joy that come from realizing that just-me, being of service, can create shift for others.

This butter – of hearing that my stories and paintings and dancing and art making has touched someone – made them laugh or made them cry, it doesn't matter – it's that the touch I've offered feels to them like that elixir of butter does to me, melting on my tongue, suffusing my mouth with flavor and pleasure.

However, barring licking the butter off of the knife (which I confess to having done on occasion), butter actually needs it's vehicle. The bread, or beast (if you're into eating * oh-my-goddess-good * steak with an herbed butter melted on top) is not only necessary; it makes up the bulk of that bite.

The bread, that vehicle, that foundation of small business, is comprised of all the things that sometimes we want to do, but sometimes we don't, the daily, weekly and monthly myopic tasks that are necessary to build up to our intents, goals and creations.

To get completely literal, I've recently started baking bread.

It's a little ironic, given that my body doesn't love gluten and I try to limit it even though I love it like crazy.

But I've got hungry bellies to feed, making is cheaper than buying, and — coming back to the pleasure part – there's nothing more satisfying than cracking open a loaf of hot-from-the-oven bread and dropping a glob of butter on, smearing it as it melts and then eating it with children.

Which brings me back to the foundation of my small business.

There's a lot of work involved in getting to the point where I can put my butter on my bread.

That loaf of bread takes hours to realize. It takes the patience of allowing the yeast to do it's thing, the timing of knowing when to punch the dough down and let it rise again, and the feel for how long to knead, and at what temperature to bake it, the amount of time in the oven, as well as what kinds of flours to use to achieve my desired effect.

Those mundane tasks. The daily drudgery. The administration.

The replying and reconnecting and following up on people, and the booking and appointment making and strategic planning and scheduling and also making space for the creative time and creating moments.

The downtime that is so necessary, yet hard to allow. *That's the bread.*

And I've discovered that the beastly challenges, the hardest times arise when I'm in the breadmaking part of my business.

Because, for me, the beastly parts of being a solopreneur are mostly made up of my own fear and self-doubt.

I don't have any particularly dramatic stories of small business challenges, because I find that the thoughts that circulate in my head and work so hard to pull me off track and sabotage me are dramatic enough.

They simmer away on a daily basis, always waiting for those moments where I'm feeling a little more susceptible or tired to leap up and shut me down.

"Who do you think you are" they say. "You don't know anything" they add.

"So you've got three degrees. So you get great feedback. I know better. You're just a fraud. You're an imposter. Wait till they find out what's really going on. Wait till they find out that you really don't know a thing, that you're just good at fooling everyone" they chant.

“You’re not where you thought you’d be. You’re a failure. You may as well quit now. What you’re doing is crazy. No one will understand you” and on and on and on. Any small crack, any point of insecurity, those voices will grab and use it all.

If I have a momentary stumble, the intensity of those voices escalates into a chorus, singing and chanting in rounds.

That right there is the real beast of my business. It’s not so much the occasional critical feedback from former clients or people that are curious about my services (which is usually possible to resolve, constructive, and often useful).

It’s the way that my internal judge/critic/saboteur interprets those small moments of conflict and feedback that creates the challenging internal drama of my small business beast.

Eckhart Tolle writes a lot about the pain-body in his book *A New Earth*, and I find his concept so useful.

This pain-body looks and feels, in me, like a literal beast.

When the ‘who do you think you are’ voices start to chant I can feel an ugly twist start to form under my skin, pulling my lips into a sneer as my eyes get squintier and I hunch forward and down. My posture gets beastly, my face gets nasty, and the victim and target of my thoughts is always and only me. Which means there is no easy way to run away.

And so. What do I do? What does anyone do?

I have another kind of bread that helps to soothe these particular beasts.

It’s the soft and slow pace of daily loving.

Loving myself with walks in nature. Loving myself with dancing (because that’s my favourite thing to do). Loving myself with morning pages, with small moments of meditation (even 10 minutes will do). Loving myself with friendships, and community, and talking about these things to others. Loving myself with massage and bodywork and cooking.

Making art. Writing. Yoga.

Whatever it is, the soothing of my own beast involves movement and pleasure.

Which brings me back around to butter. Because butter is so pleasurable.

With a sheer and transparent shine. A melting. A moment of physical pause, right after taking a bite, as all nerve endings vacate their homes elsewhere in the body and transport themselves to my mouth, every ending quivering as it receives the taste sensation and transports that exquisite buttery pleasure to me and my brain.

Nothing else moves, everything relaxes, and my eyes roll back.

p.s – in a pinch, if you’ve run out of butter, I find coconut oil tastes almost as good.

About the Author



Janelle Hardy leads people towards joyous relationship with themselves through embodied creativity – combining art and storytelling with body awareness and intuitive witnessing. She creates Devotional Paintings (unique intuitive guidance), a monthly snail-mail subscription called Letters From Vancouver Island, and leads an Embodied Creativity Guidance Group on Facebook. Find her at JanelleHardy.com

Louise Hardy's Focaccia (and sourdough starter)



(because my mom's focaccia is the best vehicle for my butter)

Ingredients:

6-8 cups flour

2 heaping tablespoons instant yeast (fast-rising)

room temperature water – amount varies depending on preference

1.5-2 cups sourdough starter

sea salt to taste

herbs to taste – your choice

optional: 1 cup buttermilk

Directions:

In a big bowl, put about 6-8 cups of flour and the fast rising yeast (instant yeast). Put some salt in the palm of your hand and then in the flour. Then add two heaping tablespoons of the yeast and then pour in about a cup and a half to two cups of sourdough starter.

Depending on your mood you might add about a cup of buttermilk, but usually not. Then start to stir and pour in some room temperature warmish water. Keep stirring. You want a soft dough. It won't be stiff at all because you don't knead it.

Let me see. The consistency is sort of like a cake batter, but a touch thicker. Then you cover it and leave it to bubble and it should have nice yeasty bubbles that come up. Let it sit for about 2 hours, then stir it down and let it bubble up again.

You have to have a nice hot oven, around 400 degrees. You pour the dough onto parchment paper on the pan. Don't knead it or push it down, you just want it to flow onto the paper.

Sprinkle some nice sea salt and herbs on top, and cook for 15 to 20 minutes. You'll know it's done by tapping the bottom for that nice hollow sound.

That's it.

You have to be willing to experiment and create your own focaccia texture. I like the dough with more bubbles. Some people like it thicker and sturdier but I like it bubblier. You can experiment with the oven too – by going up to 475 and as low as 350 and you'll get completely different bread. And depending if you bake it on a pan or on a stone, etcetera. These all create different types of focaccia. Have fun with it.

Sourdough Starter

Flour

Water

Grapes

Cheesecloth

Bucket

The sourdough starter my son and I began 18 years ago when he was 16, because I had always wanted my own starter.

We made it by breaking and bruising grapes then putting them in a cheesecloth sack. You put the grapes in the sack and then into a bucket or bowl with the flour and water mixture and leave it for about 10 days at room temperature. You want it to pick up all the wild yeast that's floating around in the air.

Usually after about 7 days you take the bag of grapes out and let the starter continue to bubble for 3 or 4 more days, then store it in the fridge. As long as you use it about once a week and replenish it with more water and flour it will last forever.

We're in it Together

by Theresa Reed



Today was going to be one of those rare days when I treated myself to some pampering.

It's uncommon for me because I'm hella busy.

I run two businesses so time off is precious. Like most entrepreneurs, my days are long and I'm often working seven days a week. I don't mind though because I do love my work.

There's nothing I love more than a quiet lull in my day and an opportunity to slip away to the local spa. A luxe environment with scented candles, hot tea, and highly trained professionals taking care of my every need: nirvana. And well deserved!

As I arrived at the spa (ten minutes early per their requirements), the receptionist greeted me and sent me to the changing room to get ready. I

slipped into a comfy robe, grabbed my tea, and sat in the lounge area, waiting for my massage therapist to arrive.

And I waited.

And waited.

I started watching the clock, which is never relaxing. With each minute that passed, I got angrier and angrier.

An attendant walked in and said hi but quickly walked back out. She didn't take the time to see if I needed anything.

Twenty minutes into sitting there in that dark little lounge, I'm fuming.

I wasn't sure what happened to the massage therapist, but someone could have alerted me that he was running late. That didn't happen.

I got up, changed back into my street clothes and hightailed it out of there. I had other things on my agenda and couldn't risk running late because of an irresponsible masseuse.

As I peeked into the waiting area, no sign of him — or anyone else for that matter.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to keep my cool when I walked out past the receptionist.

I let her know that I'd been stood up and that I was pissed off. "I'm sorry" she said but she did nothing to stop me from leaving.

As I walked to my car, I called my husband in tears (and barely missed getting swiped by another car). "How could they do this? What kind of unprofessional behavior is this?"

I'll never go back! I was looking forward to this!"

My husband listened patiently and then reminded me that these were "first world problems" and it might be best to let this go and move on to a different spa.

Although he was right, it still didn't make me feel better. My shoulders were in knots and now I was a rage machine. So much for nirvana!

I came home, composed an email to the spa, and then just got busy with my own work.

A few hours later, a message came in from the spa manager, who apologized profusely for the experience and offered me a free massage for my trouble. He also wanted to hear exactly what happened so he could make sure it wouldn't happen again.

In other words, he listened to me – and bent over backwards to remedy the situation.

Did I feel better? You betcha.

This gesture showed me that this was a place that wanted to keep my business. His effort said: "I care about you and want you to be happy. You did your end but we didn't do ours — so let us make this right."

That's classy. And it's how business should be done.

Whether you're running a big organization or a small time gig like I do, taking care of your clients is a top priority.

That means:

- Showing up on time – or giving people reasonable notice when you cannot.
- Being neat and presentable.
- Treating people with respect.
- Having clear policies posted so everyone knows what to expect.
- Conducting yourself like a pro.
- Taking time to add extra care and little touches.
- Making an effort to right things when you screw up.
- Caring about your client's experience with you.
- Not leaving people hanging (follow through is king).

A business run like that shows that you are all about service and that is a business that will thrive, year after year.

Why?

Because people want to be treated well.

It doesn't matter what they're coming to you for — service with a smile and concern says: *you matter*.

That same vibration goes both ways.

Because I'm a business owner, I'm extremely mindful of how I treat my service providers.

I show up on time, am polite, and follow the rules without kvetching. Many who work with me say I'm an "ideal client" because of that.

Learning how to be that kind of customer is easier when you've spent many years on the other side of the table. You know what it's like to be stood up, ripped off, or treated rudely. So you make that extra effort to be ultra-kind.

No matter whom I'm doing business with (as service provider or customer), my mantra is:

Be as caring as possible.

That energy leads to long term, friendly business relationships. It's a win/win for both sides.

Take my bank for example.

I've been with them for about twenty years. Why do I stay at this bank when there are so many to choose from? It's not just the convenient location (five minutes from my home). It's not the fancy checks (you can get those anywhere). It's not the rates (believe me, there are banks with better interest than this one).

It's because of the relationships I've developed with the staff.

When I walk in, they greet me like a long lost friend. If I have a banking issue, they listen and take care of it immediately. We chit chat about life (and reality

television) and they always send me off with a friendly goodbye. Why go anywhere else when you get that level of service?

Last week, we were talking about food (a typical subject when I mosey in there) and a teller asked me if I liked cheesecake. An enthusiastic yes followed with a discussion on how I make a mighty good cheesecake. So guess what I'm doing this week?

Yep — I'm making a cheesecake for the bank tellers. It's going to be a delicious, creamy, chocolate-espresso with little dark chocolate-covered coffee beans on top.

It's decadent and a perfect way to show my gals that I appreciate them.

(Plus, they informed me that a certain other customer is prone to bringing in baked goods so I took that as a challenge or a sly hint!)

Business is all about relationships. We're in it together.

It's that person-to-person contact that makes all the difference in the world. It doesn't matter what line of work you're in — if you put the focus on relationships, you'll have a winning business model.

Take good care of your people. Add those extra touches that show you are in it for them.

Listen deeply, even when they aren't happy campers (memo: that does not mean taking abuse from ne'er do wells, it means being present and taking ownership when you've made a mistake).

Be present and show up as the very best you possible.

And make cheesecake. Glorious, sinfully rich cheesecake.

Blessings!

Theresa

About the Author



Theresa Reed (aka The Tarot Lady) is an intuitive Tarot reader, teacher, mentor and yogi on a mission to take Tarot from hippie to hip. When she's not reading tarot, she's busy helping broke-ass mystics learn how to create sustainable + profitable businesses.

If you are ready for straight talkin' tarot and a side of biz whizz, get to her online hood: [The Tarot Lady](#) or follow her on Twitter [@thetarotlady](#).

Chocolate Espresso Swirl Cheesecake

(from 125 Best Cheesecakes by George Geary)



Preheat oven to 350F. 9 inch springform pan, ungreased.

Ingredients

Crust

- 1 1/2 c. chocolate sandwich cookie crumbs, crushed
- 1/4 c. unsalted butter, melted

Filling

- 4 packages of cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/2 c. granulated sugar
- 1/2 c. sour cream
- 4 eggs
- 1 tbsp instant coffee powder
- 1 tbsp hot water
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 oz. bitter sweet chocolate, melted and cooled

Directions

1. Crust: In a medium bowl, combine cookie crumbs and butter. Press into bottom of cheesecake pan and freeze.
2. Filling: In a large mixer bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar on medium-high for three minutes. Add sour cream. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each

addition. In a small bowl, dissolve coffee powder in hot water. While the mixer is running, pour coffee in a steady stream into the batter. Add vanilla. Stir 1 cup batter into melted chocolate and set aside. Pour remaining batter over frozen crust.

3. Using a spoon, drop six large puddles of melted chocolate mixture on top of the batter. Using a small knife drag through the puddles in spiral motions to create a marbling effect. Bake in preheated oven for 45 – 55 minutes or until the top is light brown and the center has a slight jiggle to it. Cool on a rack for 2 hours. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours before decorating or serving.

Decorate with whipped cream and chocolate-covered coffee beans.

Serves 10 to 12.

Adapt and Reinvent: The Good, The Bad, and The Delicious

by Carol Lynn Rivera



We booked a cruise that year, our first real vacation since our honeymoon.

Sure, we'd done short trips – Boston, New York, even the southern and more touristy parts of New Jersey. But this vacation was serious.

We hired a cat sitter and everything.

The cruise was scheduled for July. In March the call came.

“We’re cutting out marketing. And we need you to refund the retainer we paid you.”

It was in the heart of the financial crisis and our biggest client had just cut the cord.

We'd been working with them for five years, a pretty good ride on a pretty tasty gravy train. Guaranteed work, big retainers paid in advance and enough income that we could play on a boat for a while that summer.

Except we didn't count on it ending. You never really do, do you?

We incorporated our business in 1999. Put the official stamp on it. We've been working together ever since, a husband-wife team running a marketing company out of a home office in New Jersey.

People like to ask us, "How do you do it? In the same room together all day?"

It never occurred to me that it wouldn't work. I've never really understood people who get married and then can't wait to take a night off from each other, so I never really know how to answer that question.

"We just do."

Our business has seen ups and downs. Some years we take off every Tuesday to catch the early matinee movie. Other years we work weekends and fifteen hour days. That year, the year of the Big Meltdown, we were cruising along.

For five years we'd become more and more focused on that client.

It was a lot of work. It took up most of our time. It paid most of our bills. For five years we didn't have to worry about filling our sales funnel. We were doing well.

That ended quite literally one day in March when our client – a financial service provider in the dead center of a financial crisis – told us they were enacting some pretty austere measures. And one of those was cutting us out of the picture, 100%.

But that wasn't all. They'd paid us in advance for one particular service. Now they were backing out. And wanted their money back.

So that day in March, three months before our first real vacation in twelve years, we returned the retainer and stared into the hole of our empty sales funnel. And we worried.

That was a pretty dark time in our business. It wasn't the first. Nor was it the last. But it was certainly the worst.

It was worse than losing a client. Worse than giving back a whole lot of money. It also coincided with the worst possible time to be looking for business because everyone was shutting down, tightening up, cutting out. Marketing is always the first to go.

When a company can barely keep the lights on, it does no good to remind them that the most important time to be marketing is during slow times. Small businesses couldn't spend anymore. They couldn't even make payroll.

Most times businesses can squeeze out some money for marketing, but not this time.

It did no good to reach out to our old clients. It did no good to network. There was simply no money circulating.

I look back on those first few months of crisis and I hardly remember what we did to survive. I think the word is: anything.

We did stuff we swore we'd never do again. Stuff we didn't like. Stuff that wasn't profitable.

We took the work we could. We talked about cancelling our vacation, but we'd already paid for it and knew we'd take a loss on the refund policy. We also knew we might go crazy if we didn't get away.

I do remember we talked a lot about "getting a job." It had been a good run, but things were looking pretty grim. But again we came up against the reality of the time: nobody was spending and nobody was hiring, either. I mean, not unless you needed money desperately enough to go flip burgers or something. Hire a marketing professional, though? Not happening.

Besides, we hadn't had a "job" in ten years. Hadn't spent more than a handful of hours not in the same room.

We enjoyed working together, running our business together. We enjoyed volleying clients back and forth depending on who was having a better day. We enjoyed delegating stuff one of us didn't like to do but the other excelled at. We enjoyed our working Saturdays as much as we enjoyed our Tuesday matinees. We enjoyed making sandwiches in our own kitchen at lunchtime. Getting a job didn't seem like much of an option once we started thinking about it. So we took a "sink or swim" approach.

We were going to fix things, and that was it.

I can't tell you it was easy. Or fun. We went on vacation and had a good time, but there was an undercurrent of unspoken tension: every second we spent on that boat was one not spent working. Every cocktail was another few dollars not going toward the mortgage.

You try to relax and have fun because that's what people tell you to do. What they say you need to do. And in the rational part of your brain you know it. You know you can't work all the time.

You know you can't function at your best without a chance to re-energize. But when the bills are staring at you and the client list is short, all that rational stuff gets swallowed in the fear of what comes next and whether or not you can really pull your business back from the edge of the abyss.

That was a time of reinvention for us. We reinvented our services, our pricing, our processes. It was almost like starting a business all over again. Adapt or die, as they say, and we weren't ready for the "die" part.

It was also a time of learning – or should I say relearning – a lot of things we should have known better about. Things like "don't get too comfortable" and "success isn't a promise."

When you run your own business you never sleep, not really. That business is your baby and you will worry about it until the day you die. Even during good times it's important to remember that nothing lasts, nothing stays the same. We've watched friends, colleagues and competitors go out of business because they forgot those simple truths. They didn't adapt, didn't grow, didn't throw out what they knew and start over when they had to.

They just kept going along the same path without recognizing that when the path starts to wind steeply uphill it may just be time to find another path.

We learned the importance of relationships.

Not that we didn't know it before, but when you're cruising along during good times it's very easy to get lazy and complacent. It's easy to get "too busy" to send out those stay-in-touch emails. Easy to stop looking for new business when you have enough to sustain you.

But perhaps most importantly we learned (relearned? reinforced?) what we already knew, and that's what we really wanted out of life, which was to run our business, do it well, and do it together.

Messy, hard, occasionally scary, but in the end what we wanted. So we buckled up and hung on.

It's almost six years later and we've had our ups and downs. Sometimes we go to Tuesday matinees and sometimes we work all weekend. We're a little wiser (and grayer) now and we're careful to cultivate business even when we don't need it and stay in touch with clients even when they haven't worked with us in a while. We pay attention more and make sure we're ready to rethink and adapt.

We haven't booked another vacation, but that's what next year is for.

In the meantime, we do what we love best, and that's run our business. Together.

In the spirit of reinvention and adaptation, I want to share one of our favorite recipes with you. I learned it from my husband's mother who learned it from generations of mothers before her.

My recipe is just as different from hers as hers is from the matriarchs who came before.

If you know anything about family recipes, there's never really a recipe. It's just a little of this and a handful of that. If you find something else in the refrigerator, you toss it in. If you're out of something, you use something else.

It's not a lot different than running a business. You figure it out, you make it work, and sometimes it's delicious and sometimes... well, sometimes even the cat won't touch it.

Here's my basic recipe. You can make it your own.

About the Author



Carol Lynn is a content creator and marketer who has been in the business of digital marketing since 1999. Along with her husband and business partner Ralph, she owns and operates Rahvalor Interactive, a web and creative services production studio that offers the [Web.Search.Social service line](#).

On any given day Carol Lynn will wear the hat of project manager, consultant, social media manager and content marketer. Her true passion is writing, whether it's web content, a blog post, email campaign or social status update. When she's not writing for customers, Web.Search.Social, or her own blog, she's planning her early retirement to Barcelona as a famous and wealthy novelist.

Arroz con Pollo



Ingredients

- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 white onion
- 1 bunch of fresh cilantro
- 4 cloves of garlic

Those are the basics but you can add other vegetables to your liking, like carrots or peas.

Olive oil

Half a can of tomato paste

A jar of green pimento olives

4 chicken legs (thighs and drumsticks)

4 chicken breasts

(You can mix and match the chicken parts you like best as long as you aim for 8 pieces. If you use small pieces like drumsticks then double up. Bone-in chicken gives the best flavor and cooks the nicest.)

6 cups of parboiled white rice

8 cups of chicken broth

(I prefer homemade chicken broth. You can get creative with liquid and throw in a beer or two. Try to avoid plain water. It doesn't add the same flavor. I also prefer parboiled rice to other types because it doesn't stick as much or get as soggy.)

Ground cumin

Ground coriander

Garlic powder

Salt

Black pepper

2-3 Bay leaves

Get ready to work!

Clean the chicken but leave the skin on.

In a small bowl, make a spice mix of equal parts cumin, coriander, garlic powder, salt and pepper. 1-2 teaspoons of each should do it, depending on how much flavor you want. Just like in business, the spice is the best part. Don't be afraid to throw some in.

Cover the chicken in olive oil and rub it under the skin. Then douse the chicken in the spice mixture, under and over the skin. Get your hands dirty! If you're afraid to get your hands dirty, your dinner – and your business – will suffer. And by "dirty" I mean down-in-the-trenches hard work.

Heat some olive oil in a rather large pot over medium to medium-low heat, enough to cover the bottom of the pot but not too much. You don't want greasy rice.

Put a few pieces of chicken in the pot so they aren't touching. Cook a few pieces at a time for a few minutes per side until the skin is brown and crispy. You don't need to cook the chicken through. As each batch is done, remove it to a plate.

It will start to smell heavenly and you'll start to think you can really do this thing!

While the chicken cooks, start chopping vegetables. If you run a business I bet you know how to wear multiple hats at once.

Chop the vegetables (except the peas) and toss them into a bowl. When it comes to the cilantro, give it a good rinse under running water then chop an inch or two off the stems and chop the rest into the bowl. You don't have to pull the leaves off the stems as long as you're chopping everything. The stems add more flavorful.

Chop the olives, too, but keep them in a separate bowl. I like to cut them into approximate quarters but you can leave them whole or make them smaller depending on how you like your olives.

When all the chicken is crisped and partly cooked (and waiting in a plate on the side), dump your vegetables (except the peas!) into the pot and sauté them for 5-10 minutes until they're slightly translucent. Don't overcook them. You want nice, colorful vegetables and not a soggy mess.

Mix in the tomato paste until everything is smooth. Add the rice in and mix until the rice is coated with the oil. Add the Bay leaves and olives. Add the chicken back in and mix some more.

Add the broth (and beer if you're using it). Mix everything super well, making sure the rice and chicken are submerged.

Raise the heat a bit to medium or medium-high and let the liquid boil. Lightly boil the liquid for 10-15 minutes until it is just above the level of the rice and chicken. The trick is to boil it down without exposing the rice or you'll end up with crunchy, undercooked rice in some parts and soggy, overcooked rice in others.

Give everything a stir again and move the chicken around as needed to keep the rice submerged. Then cover the pot, turn the heat to low and let the rice and chicken finish cooking for about 20 minutes longer.

No peeking! Ignore your OCD and ADD and take this time to make a nice batch of pre-dinner guacamole (oh, you want that recipe too? Look me up online, I'll share my favorite.)

You'll know it's done when it looks done. The liquid will be gone and the rice will be relatively dry and fluffy.

And finally... if you're using them, add the peas. They only need a minute to heat up.

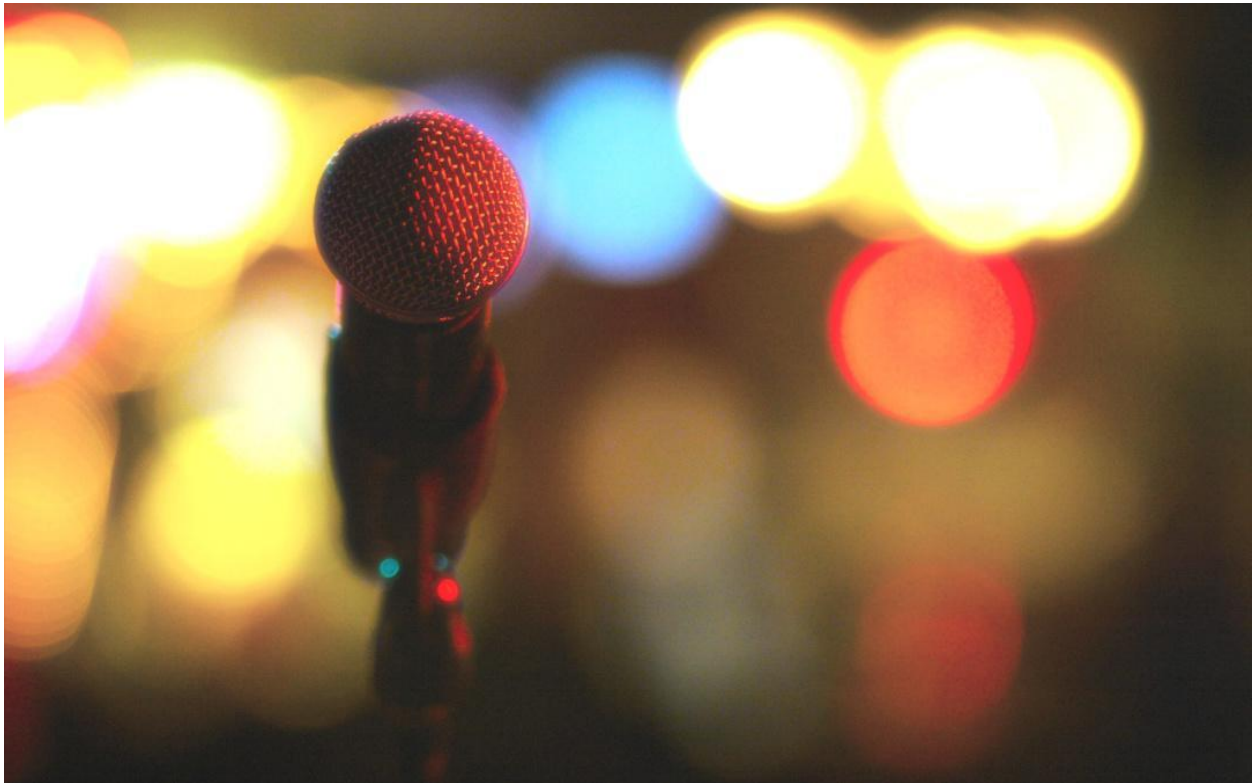
Scoop out a big mound of rice and lay your favorite piece of chicken on top.
Enjoy!

And if you want the real secret to the best arroz con pollo? Take the lid off the pot and let the rice cook a little longer even after it's done. It will stick to the bottom of the pot and turn into a crispy concón.

Then you can scrape it off with a spoon or a knife and eat it. That, my friends, is the best part. I'll leave you to fight over who gets it.

Recipes to Build On

by Lisa Braithwaite



I started my coaching business at the end of 2005.

Back in those days, I did believe that you hung out a shingle and people came running. Every professional needs public speaking coaching, right?

I told everyone what I was doing, built a website, and waited for the money to roll in.

I got clients right away. I got speaking and training engagements. And I was even quoted in *Men's Journal* fairly early on.

I felt pretty good about my business, except for that pesky thing called income. It wasn't exactly how I'd envisioned my career going, especially after having left (okay, been laid off from) a pretty well-paying job.

I'm embarrassed to say that I flew by the seat of my pants for SIX YEARS.

My business certainly continued to grow, but not through any great effort on my part besides the occasional press release.

There was no planning, no structure, no analysis, no design. I didn't know where I wanted to go, so I didn't go.

And I became the queen of free training.

I sought out every free resource I could find, from any coach who offered it, a hodgepodge of materials on everything from marketing to web design to branding to social media to productivity to list-building to blogging to pricing.

Of course, the real learning was in the paid coaching and training, but I didn't want to spend the money.

I was doing the very thing I tell my clients and audiences to avoid: Piecing stuff together. Making it up as you go along. Winging it.

In 2012, a coach whose free content I'd been consuming for some time offered an amazing special on one of her online programs. I mean, it was so cheap that even *I* could see my way to pay for it: an 8-week program for only \$97. I jumped into my first paid program.

Things snowballed from there.

I got so much out of that program that I flew across the country for her three-day training. And I got so much from *that* training, that I joined her 9-month group coaching program.

It cost a lot of money. I was happy to pay.

I'd learned something important: I needed direction, and I wasn't going to get anywhere trying to figure it out by myself.

And guess what happened (in case you haven't already figured it out): My business began to grow!

Investing in coaching and training brought the nifty side effect of actually taking my business seriously. I started setting goals, making plans and building something sustainable.

Another side effect of choosing one mentor over following many “gurus” was that I started to deepen my knowledge, use better tools and implement solid content. I started to have direction, and created a path for my future.

By piecing together materials from many gurus, I hadn’t been learning, I’d been collecting.

I was gathering scraps and fragments, and trying to put together one puzzle from the pieces of many.

Now, here’s the best part.

Having created a foundation and a plan for my business, I get to wing it again!

But now I’m winging it from a place of structure and goals.

“Making it up” from a place of knowing where I want to go and how to get there.

Because now that I actually understand my business, how it works and how I want to create my life around it, I’m free to play and experiment.

I’m not just throwing out ideas into the wind and hope they work; my ideas are coming from a place of knowledge and experience.

I use a similar approach when cooking.

When I want to try a new dish, I almost always start with a recipe. I know it’s been tested and developed with a certain final product in mind, with a particular flavor profile, texture, mouthfeel and appearance.

I usually make a recipe a few times “as is” before I begin experimenting. I like to understand how the ingredients work together and what the outcome should be before I start making adjustments.

One of my favorite dishes that allows for endless experimentation is based on a recipe that I found in the Crabtree & Evelyn cookbook back in 1989, and it has never failed to satisfy me.

It's a simple casserole called "Light Herbed Rice Cake," with rice, cheese, egg, and herbs.

Over the years, as I've become a more adventurous cook, I've gotten more adventurous with the recipe.

Sometimes I use half quinoa and half rice. Or sometimes I use millet or kasha in place of half the rice.

When I'm in a spicy mood, I add roasted chilies, corn, zucchini and Mexican spices.

When I'm just throwing something together, whatever's in the fridge will suffice: steamed broccoli, red peppers, grated carrot, sautéed kale... whatever.

I might use thyme one day, marjoram the next. Sage sautéed till crispy in butter with a touch of smoked paprika never hurts. Sometimes it's just a bit of green onion that adds flavor.

One time I had leftover roasted butternut squash, so I tossed that in with truffle cheese, truffle oil and truffle salt. Truly decadent.

This is my go-to recipe that I could probably make every night of the week and it would never be the same.

And understanding the basics of the recipe is what makes experimentation so much fun.

Instead of melted butter, I use garlic oil. It's a winner. But I've also cut down on the amount of fat over the years because over time it just seemed to need less.

I've learned that some vegetables add too much liquid of their own and can make the casserole watery. Leftover pasta sauce makes a good substitute for the liquid in the recipe. I've also learned that sometimes it takes a LOT of seasoning to overcome the mild creaminess of the cheese and rice.

Back to my business: When I'm scared about launching a new program or trying something risky, my coach says, "Everything is a test." It's so true!

Having a strong foundation (in cooking and in my business) allows me to explore, improvise, be creative, test ideas, accept new opportunities and – most important – be okay with the outcome, even if sometimes it leaves a bad taste in my mouth!



About the Author

Lisa Braithwaite is a public speaking coach and trainer, helping entrepreneurs and professionals create memorable and engaging presentations. Before launching her business, she spent 16 years as an advocate, educator and trainer in the Santa Barbara nonprofit sector.

Lisa's philosophy is that public speaking is fun, it's a perfect way to express yourself creatively, and that authenticity and passion are worth more than a thousand techniques. Find her online at CoachLisaB.com

Rice Casserole



(My variation on Light Herbed Rice Cake from Crabtree and Evelyn Cookbook, 1989)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Ingredients

2 cups of cooked grain: I always use one cup of rice and one cup of whatever else I have on hand.

2-4 tablespoons oil or melted butter: I like less; you might like more.

1 cup grated cheese of your choosing

2-4 tablespoons of herbs, onion, garlic, or whatever other seasoning you'd like to add

One large egg, beaten

½ cup milk: I've used nondairy milks, tomato sauce and other pureed vegetables as well.

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

In a large bowl, combine oil, cheese, seasonings, egg, milk, salt and pepper and mix well. Toss in grains and combine well.

Pour mixture into a lightly buttered or oiled 8- or 9-inch square baking dish. Bake in the center of the oven for 35 to 40 minutes, or until rice is beginning to brown around the edges.

Remove from the oven and let cool for 15-20 minutes before cutting into squares.

photo credit: [mealmakeovermoms](#) via [photopin cc](#)

Tend and Nourish

by Debra Smouse



It was a beautiful evening in Washington DC.

I was on a date with a gentleman I had met while in New York City earlier in the year.

We'd shared **a beautiful meal** at Central Michel Richard, a bottle of wine, and I had promised to show him one of my favorite spots on the National Mall: the Lincoln Memorial. We climb the steps, stand in reverence before Lincoln and read the inscriptions.

Romance is definitely in the air. The moon is full and we walk around the porch to the backside of the Memorial and we are entranced by the Moon's reflection on the river. His hand caresses my cheek and **he leans in to kiss me.**

And my cell phone rings.

I, of course, answer it.

It is 2008 and I'm in the middle of the biggest and most important contract I've ever had since I started my business in 2003. It's a demanding and stressful project.

When the phone call is over, **we resume our date**. But, of course, we can't recapture the mood. We manage a half dozen more dates over the next few months, but the relationship fizzles out. Just like so many of the relationships during the 2003 to 2010 time frame.

I'll be honest: though the work was contract was demanding and the personalities were challenging, **I flat out adored the work**. My small consulting firm had taken the contract to serve as the Project Manager for an Environmental Impact Statement, which means **I am immersed in words and people every day**.

This was my typical schedule.

I'd wake up (in a hotel) around 5 AM. I turn on my computer, connect to the hotel WiFi, and begin downloading my email. I grab coffee in the lobby and process email for the next hour. I shower. Dress in a suit, hose and heels. I snag a cab and, on the fifteen minute ride to my client's office, I peruse the paper. I am in the office no later than 8 AM and my first conference call begins at 9 AM. I manage challenging personalities along with piece of the document all day. I leave the office at sometime between 5 PM and 7 PM. I take the Metro back to my hotel, drop my briefcase with the bellman, and head to one of the restaurants close to my hotel. I am back in my room by 8 PM **and work until 11 PM**.

Suffice to say, **my personal life is basically non-existent**. My blood pressure is also **sky-high** and I am about twenty-five pounds overweight.

Like many entrepreneurs, **I created my business because I was passionate** about what I could create. I chose the challenging road of being an entrepreneur because **one of my top values was freedom**.

When you are running a business, it's so easy **to get lost in the work**. We look at the outside goals – the amount of money we will make, the vacations we'll (*eventually*) take, and **dream about how successful our business is going to be**. The thing is, though, **passion and perfection** can push us towards further

away from the other things we say we value – like health, family and freedom.

And, darling, I promise you that's no way to live.

My life today no longer resembles my life in 2008.

Yes, I am still self-employed. I am still passionate about words and people, but I reconfigured my business at the end of 2010 because I realized that I wanted to keep the parts I was passionate about, but needed other things in my life as well. I wanted to be healthier. I wanted a fulfilling personal life.

I wanted freedom. And working eighteen hours on the average day isn't freedom.

On an average weekday, **I rise around 6 AM.** I start coffee and put my partner's lunch together. Between the hours of 7 AM and 6 PM, I have coffee, write in my journal and make sure I have a real breakfast. I coach brilliant people around the landmines in their lives as they work to create a daily life that feels nourishing. I run our household errands and chat with a girlfriend. I write blog posts and work on my book. I make a beautiful meal that I share with my partner and we shoot to go to bed sometime **between 9 PM and 10 PM.**

Becoming an entrepreneur is one of the most **rewarding callings you can answer.** Listening to **your passions** and turning that into a way to support yourself and your family is **beyond rewarding and fulfilling.**

If you want to create **a business that provides you with your daily bread and butter,** do the important things that allow you to create the structure you need to succeed: a business **plan,** financial **goals,** and marketing plans. Know that **the fears around creating your business** will arise. You'll **convince yourself** that the only way to success is **to devote all your time and energy to tending your business.**

But don't forget to tend yourself and nourish your life.

As you create your business plans, **dig into how you desire to feel** and make sure you're your plans **are congruent with those feelings.** As you set financial

goals, don't forget to **set boundaries around your work hours**. And darling, as you create a marketing plan for your business, plan for ways to nourish your heart and soul to ensure that you don't get lost in your work.

Remember that as you nourish and grow your business, putting a value on the quality of your daily life is a way to ensure that you keep your passion and are able to stay dedicated to your dreams.

Though I am a logical person, I believe in some age-old traditions to bring luck into your life. Like eating **Black-Eyed Peas with Pork** on New Year's Day to ensure a lucky and prosperous year.

About the Author



Debra Smouse is a Tarnished Southern Belle, writer and life coach on a mission to help people fall in love with their daily lives. An expert de-tangler, she believes in busting clutter as a path to greater clarity and that within every woman is vibrant, passionate, and sexy being just itching to make their inner sex kitten roar.

Ready to ditch resolutions and choose a “theme” for your year instead? Get some help with her [free e-Book Create a Year You Love: Choosing Your 2015 Touchstones](#).

Black-Eyed Peas with Pork



Ingredients

a pound of dried black-eyed peas
one diced yellow onion
6 sliced (or pressed) cloves of garlic
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon garlic powder
a dozen grinds of freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon of kosher salt
3 bay leaves
4 cups of vegetable or chicken stock

Directions

Before you go to bed, rinse **a pound of dried black-eyed peas** and place them in your crock-pot. Cover them with **water** and leave them overnight.

In the morning, drain and rinse the peas and place them back in the crock-pot. **Add one diced yellow onion, 6 sliced (or pressed) cloves of garlic, ½ teaspoon of cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, a dozen grinds of freshly ground black pepper, 1 teaspoon of kosher salt and 3 bay leaves.** Add **4 cups of vegetable or chicken stock** (Kitchen Basics is my go-to). You may need to add a little bit more water until the beans are completely covered.

Put your crock-pot on low.

Then, take either **a boneless pork loin chop or pork loin** (about ¾ pound) and dice it into bite sized chunks. Heavily season it (**salt, pepper, garlic, cumin**). Add **1 tablespoon of olive oil** to a skillet and sear the meat until it has a nice brown color. Add the contents of the entire skillet to the crock-pot (yes, including the olive oil). Cook on low for about 8 hours.

When the peas are done, **remove about a cup of them** and throw them in a blender or use your immersion blender to **cream them**. Add that back to the crock-pot and leave on low for another 20 minutes. This will make a huge difference to the quality, the overall creaminess, and depth of flavor. Remove the bay leaves before you serve!

You can always double the amount of meat you add to this if you know you want to serve it alone and want something heartier. You can make a meal on its own with the peas and some cornbread – another lucky food because it represents GOLD.

Nourish Yourself to Nourish Your Business

by Andy Hayes



I felt a little faint, and the next thing I knew, I had someone asking me if I was OK.

Was I OK? I wasn't sure.

Have you ever heard the [boiling frog story](#)? It suggests that if you put a frog into a pot of boiling water, it will jump out, whereas if you put a frog into cold water and slowly bring the water up to boiling temperature, it will not jump out.

While metaphors about slowly killing frogs seems a little cruel, there is an essential truth here that we need to talk about. Have you ever found yourself in a not-so-good routine and wondered how the heck you got there? Maybe you've got a client that treats you poorly, and you've been taking their verbal lashings for months and months.

Maybe you keep setting your alarm an hour earlier, an hour earlier, trying to get all of your work done, and finding yourself no closer to your goal and dead tired.

Just like that poor frog, entrepreneurs can easily slip into a comfort zone and not really notice when the environment turns unsuitable. It's just too easy to turn a blind eye to our own needs when there's a client calling, an inbox overflowing, and the coffee pot is empty.

Here's the thing. Entrepreneurs need to be taking good care of themselves. If you take care of yourself, you're able to take care of your business.

A Little Backstory...

I've got a little confession to share with you: I was that poor frog once (but hopped out of the pot, eventually, this story is not posthumous).

My career started off on a high point, many years ago. I worked at a large technology company, loving my work, loving my colleagues, traveling the world, working really hard but making an incredible amount of money that made it all feel worthwhile.

I moved to Amsterdam, living the good life and work continued to be good. I ended up making a switch during a big corporate acquisition, moving into the same job with a bit less money and much better benefits — 8 weeks vacation, anyone?

While savoring my vacations and enjoying the expat lifestyle, I often wondered if I'd ever tire of my work — while my mother had the same job almost her entire life, most of my contemporaries were switching it up regularly.

I didn't have much time to wonder — another corporate acquisition came my way, this time an even bigger one. My entire department was shifted over to a different country, different company. While we were promised we'd essentially be doing the same job for the same money... the devil is in the details, they say.

A big shock to my system was the fact that while my salary was consistent, my living costs essentially doubled — but what was an even bigger, invisible shock was the toxic work environment that I found myself in.

Thinking about that poor frog from earlier, I'm curious that if all this happened to me again, would I recognize a toxic work environment when I saw it? It wasn't as if there was a hazard sign with skull and crossbones on the front door.

For awhile, I looked the other way, thinking maybe I was just adjusting to the cultural shift, or perhaps my new colleagues were just getting settled with all the changes they'd experiences.

Having seen people I respected yelled at in meetings and heading home with tears in their eyes once too often, I decided I would try to take action and influence change myself.

That resulted in the aggressive, bullying behavior to worsen, and I became a target. I also started experiencing a variety of strange, sudden health issues — skin rashes, migraines, and fatigue.

One day, I passed out on a public bus due to the intensity of a migraine. I felt a little faint, and the next thing I knew, I had someone asking me if I was OK. Embarrassed, I told no one. But a couple of days later, one of my trusted colleagues pulled me aside and told me I needed to leave. No, he wasn't walking me out the door — he was asking me to quit, because he felt my health issues were due to the stress of the job.

It was as if I could hear the chorus of angels singing. He was right, and I couldn't believe I had totally missed it. The water was hot, and I needed to get out.

You're the Boss — Be a Good One

As if by magical release, the day I quit that job, my health problems disappeared as if they'd never been there. I'd later learn I was a victim of [psychosomatic](#) stressors.

I got out of there as quickly as I could, started my own business, and never looked back. Have never been happier.

Here's the thing — while I'm not an expert on stress and emotional health problems, I can spot them a mile away. And I see them all the time. Why do so many self-employed people take such terrible care of themselves?

Most of us — myself included — start on an independent career path to craft lifestyles we love, do work we enjoy, and find happiness and fulfillment in the workplace. But unfortunately, entrepreneurship does not come with a self-care manual. Maybe I should write one, but here's what I'd like you to know, right now.

- **Drink more water and decaf tea.** Ease up on the caffeinated drinks and booze. Start right now.
- **Prioritize sleep over email.** Seriously, [not getting enough sleep will kill you](#).
- **Make sure your desk and chair are comfortable and ergonomically suitable.** Clients can wait — your back cannot.
- **Eat properly.** When you take some time in the kitchen and at the dinner table, you can return to your desk with fresh eyes.
- Speaking of leaving your desk for a bit, **get some exercise.** If you tell me you don't have time to exercise, then you're probably in the most need for it.
- **Try some meditation** — 3-5 minutes in the morning is enough. Right after you wake up. Just sit for a second and visualize what you want to accomplish today. [Visualization has proven results](#).

You deserve to be a good boss to yourself. You owe it to yourself, your customers, and your employees/partners to take care of yourself so you can show up and do your best, most creative work. I give you permission right now to practice a little self-care when you need it, as often as needed. Nourish yourself and you nourish your business.

In the vein of nourishment, I want to share with you a recipe for a quick and easy snack that is great to have near your desk: roasted chickpeas. They're full of fiber and nutrients, and healthier (and dare I say – better) than potato chips. You can change up the type of spices you use too.

About the Author



Andy Hayes is the founder and creator of [Plum Deluxe](#), the website that helps you create moments that matter.

From their popular organic loose leaf tea line to their daily inspirational articles and resources, Plum Deluxe wants you to know what it means to live the good life.

Savory Snacking: Roasted Chickpeas



Note: you can easily double or triple this recipe suit your current cravings.

Ingredients:

- 1 can garbanzo beans
- 1 tablespoons salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon, dried rosemary

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 400F. Drain chickpeas from the can. Removing the skins is optional – they will tend to flake off during the roasting process, but I like to run the chickpeas under cold water and give them a good shake to remove loose skins.

Strain and dry off chickpeas to remove any excess liquid, then spread evenly on a baking sheet.

In a small bowl, combine the salt, rosemary and olive oil. Brush chickpeas with coating.

Put chickpeas in oven for 30 minutes or until chickpeas are golden brown on top. You don't want to burn them, but make sure they're nice and crispy.

When done, pull chickpeas out of oven and let them cool on the tray for 5 minutes or so. When cool transfer to a glass jar or airtight container.

These are amazing hot out of the oven, but will keep for 3-4 days.

They Don't Tell You

by Nick Armstrong



One of the things they don't tell you in entrepreneur school about being nearly broke is that you have to break your own club crackers in half if you want them the "normal" size.

As a result, the package goes bad twice as fast. And the off-brand zip bags you have to buy to store 'em in reek of plastic which subsequently taints your food.

They don't tell you that certain grocery stores sell food that spoils faster. And you don't know which one you're at until two days later when all your "special splurge" fruit has mold. And to exchange it would require time that you don't have or else that client project won't make it on time.

Or that buying meat in bulk is super cost effective, but that you have to be really careful to make sure you segment and store it safely.

They don't tell you that when you have \$100 in your bank account and you're starting a business, your food budget is directly competing against spending the \$72 it takes to start a MeetUp group to grow a client base.

Or that, after you've spent the money on your MeetUp group organizer fees, you can eat filling meals for next to nothing—if you're willing to eat mostly carhop-style fast food and bananas.

Or that coffee — any coffee, no matter the source — is a godsend when you've been too broke to afford it.

Go ahead, pick my brain. Just please try to ignore my not-so-subtle ecstasy after each sip.

They don't tell you that selling your boldly fluids (in my case: plasma) is how you can afford real food until your first client check comes in. Or that — and I'm not proud of this — your time is worth more than sorting laundry piles, so your clothes create a colossal colorful mountain in the corner of your room.

They don't tell you all these little indignities will feel like tiny paper cuts to your spirit.

Each time a new mark appears, you count it and hope it's not the fatal thousandth. Familiar cracks begin to form in your ego and each new challenge somehow finds a way into those old wounds.

Every entrepreneur has their own struggles. You might never have been broke, but I bet you've had your moments.

Mine just seemed to always hover near food, being able to afford it, and what it meant as a measure of success.

When I started out on my own in 2009, I landed an amazing training gig.

Colloquially, I called it Facebook for the Golden Girls (as that was about the crowd who showed up).

Don't get me wrong — I don't mean it as a derogatory. Sassy, smart, otherwise savvy business women around the ages of 50+ were the majority of the audience. The Golden Girls epitomize the spirit of friendship, youthful vigor,

and the constant aim to improve yourself. In short: they're near perfect clients who know how to hold themselves accountable to their own learning.

I enjoyed teaching, but it struck me midway through the first class that Facebook had become a basic literacy skill.

You might roll your eyes at this, but for me, it's akin to reading, writing, and knowing how to type. Texting has been in this realm for some time.

And there I was charging \$90 a head. To teach someone how to, essentially, read.

I felt awful.

Please, hold your lecture that goes something like: "Yeah, but, certain skills have a price..." — that's nonsense.

Something can have value (my time and expertise) while being unethical to charge for (basic literacy).

Picture my idea of a dystopian society: Sorry, Timmy, you can't learn how to read because the man with the books wants \$5 to lend them to you, and Mommy's gotta charge you \$1 for every word you learn. It's only "fair."

The next day, I launched my Meetup group thanks to a very generous loan from a friend.

I ate car-hop fast food and bananas for the next two weeks until my paycheck came in from the first (and only) Facebook for Golden Girls class.

I committed to teaching social media basics every other week for \$1 per head, and donated the proceeds to the Larimer County Food Bank.

Over the course of the next four years, I'd taught enough and earned enough trust in the community to create just under 4,500 meals for the Foodbank.

I'd also landed a cool number of teaching gigs, clients, and created a whole network of friends who loved to learn as much as I loved to teach.

We'd start having lunches together and discussing strategy and new ideas. Some of those friends went on to start their own companies and MeetUps. I had a lot of brain-picking coffee meetings.

On the surface, I looked to be doing pretty well.

Behind the scenes, my life was in turmoil with my habit of undercharging for almost everything, every late client payment, every new unexpected expense, and the stress from near-constant hustling.

I'd work on my couch because there was nowhere else to work.

Nothing really changed during that first year until I met the woman who would become my wife.

Stacy and I met online. Our first date was to a mall. I was an hour late, thanks to the aforementioned non-stop hustling, but she took it in stride and I showed up with a lot of flowers, which I'm sure kinda helped.

We nervously speed-walked around the whole mall. We went to the shoe store (I had on bright red Chuck Taylors and Stacy thought they were cool). I got down on my knees and helped her tie a pair of Chucks on.

Later we got dinner at Mimi's Cafe where a rambunctious child was running rampant through the restaurant. We simultaneously made a joke about tripping the kid as she ran past, and that's when everything changed.

I owe a lot to Stacy, who helped me realize that I couldn't afford to bachelor myself to death.

I got my act together. Learned how to price responsibly. Landed some ridiculously cool clients.

I upped my game so I could support Stacy while she sought out the long and winding path toward her dream job — teaching.

It wasn't just that she was there, it was that I had to become a better version of myself to help her achieve her goals.

Clients are like that, too.

I love to grow along with my clients. As their needs expand, so too do my skills to service them. If something is way outside my wheelhouse, we pass it along to a trusted friend. But if I can learn how to it, there's no power in the world to stop me — except for me.

That's the real lesson in all those hard-earned cracks, cuts, and bruises.

Only you can stop you.

So what's stopping you from working as hard as you need to? Failing and failing and failing over again until you succeed or learn a better way?

You. That's it. You're playing against yourself, mostly. They don't tell you that, either.

So why not go for the high score?

Mean or thieving competitors can get bent (nice, honest competitors get referrals).

Haters will need a support group after you prove 'em wrong.

Something in your way? Break it in half like dollar store club crackers and put it over your stew.



About the Author

Nick Armstrong is a dad, writer, audio drama enthusiast, and entrepreneur. His day job is helping small business owners make their marketing fun with [WTF Marketing](#).

He also helps small businesses struggling with their websites regain control with [Pixelated on Purpose](#).

Nick's Broke-Ass Kale Stew



Ingredients:

1 large kielbasa sausage (any kind – spicy is my favorite), cut into small coins
olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
2-3 cloves of garlic
1 large stock of kale, chopped
1-2 large potatoes, chopped
2-3 cans or 1 large (4-6 cups at least) container of chicken or vegetable broth
dollar store club crackers

Directions

Over medium-high heat, toss the kielbasa coins with the olive oil. Mix in the onion and garlic, cook until the onion is soft and the kielbasa is browned.

Combine the kielbasa, garlic, and onion mixture with the kale, potatoes, and broth into a crockpot on low for 4-6 hours OR in a large soup pot for 2-3 hours over medium-low heat, stirring every hour.

This recipe is intentionally large; store off what you can't eat and freeze.

My True Voice

by Ellen Britt



For most of my entrepreneurial journey, I thought I had to try to be like all those other successful women entrepreneurs I saw online...

Suave, sophisticated, gregarious and outgoing. Able to leverage their corporate backgrounds to deftly coach clients on any business problem while speaking from the stage, managing their own teams, and networking like pros.

The trouble was, I was none of those things.

I had come to business, not from a corporate cubicle, but from a busy Emergency Room, where I worked as a P.A. (physician assistant), managing everything from suturing chainsaw lacerations, doing chest compressions on heart attack victims, to removing fishhooks deeply embedded in the rear ends

of very embarrassed weekend anglers, plus a lot more hair raising tasks in between.

All the things that made me a pretty good diagnostician...studious, observant, introverted, research oriented, calm, quiet, sensitive, shy, and dare I say it, smart...didn't seem to fit in at all with the gals I saw online.

Loquacious pretty women in pretty dresses, flaunting their mani-pedis and their glittery bracelets along with chummy pictures of their latest groups of clients who seemed more like girlfriends than customers.

How could I hope to compete?

But one day, in one moment, everything changed.

I found my voice.

I'll get to how that happened in just a minute. But first, you have to understand a few things.

I grew up in the rural South, in a tiny little town in southwest Georgia. A town so small, it didn't even show up on most maps.

We didn't have a red light and our school was so small, two grades were often placed together in the same classroom so the teacher had to continuously shift her attention, first to one side of the room and then to the other.

I loved to study and made good grades, so there was really no pressure on me to be outgoing. We didn't have any debate club or public speaking classes, so I happily stayed in my inner world all through high school and well into college.

I did have to learn to properly present a patient when I was a student at the Medical College of Georgia, but that was under the guise of my profession.

I still hadn't found my true voice. All this time, I could sense something vital was missing, but I just couldn't put my finger on it.

So I moved away from the South and pursued other degrees, thinking more education, more knowledge, more learning would fill the void in my heart. Another Bachelors, two Masters and a Doctorate later, that hole was as deep as ever.

Then in 1999 I traveled to China to adopt a child...

A beautiful tiny little treasure of a girl who has blossomed into the biggest blessing in my life.

A few years later I moved back to my native Georgia, in part because I wanted my daughter to know the only grandparents she would ever have but also because I was trying to regain that part of myself that was still at large, unwilling to come home.

But even after the return to Georgia, the hole in my heart remained, as a profound sense of something unfulfilled, something missing.

At this point, I'd started my coaching and consulting business and was doing okay, but not great.

One day my good friend and colleague, Denise Wakeman, introduced me to a little voice app called AudioBoo (which is now Audioboom.com) and I started playing with it. AudioBoo made it easy to record quick two minute or so audios and the app would automatically post them to Facebook and Twitter.

Since I was spending a lot of time in the car driving my daughter back and forth to school, I had this idea one morning to use my iPhone to record some audio messages about what I was seeing on my morning drive and then translate those messages into marketing metaphors for my listeners.

At first, I tried to script the audios, but after I'd done a dozen or so, I got really comfortable and just started talking into the app.

One day, I decided to drive through Chick-fil-A, a popular fast food restaurant here in the South and record my customer service experience as I placed my order. Since this was a Southern experience, I ended this particular AudioBoo with 'Bye y'all...'

The AudioBoo was posted on Facebook, and as usual and I got some nice comments. But the next day, when I did another audio, I didn't end it with 'Bye y'all...' That was a mistake!

I immediately got comments, private messages and emails from listeners saying "Ellen, where's the Bye y'all...?"

That's when the light bulb went on for me.

I suddenly realized what had been missing all along. I could be myself and bring my whole personality into my business. I had found my voice.

Since that time, I've gone on to incorporate all of my 'Southernness' into my business...from the way I write my social media posts to the way I sign off at the end of my podcast. The pictures I post on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are often images of the Southern landscape, Southern flowers or food.

In fact, posts where I talk about cornbread consistently get more comments and interactions than any other posts!

Finding my voice doesn't just mean using Southern expressions in my writing and audios, it means I've finally given myself permission to be who I truly am, Southern yes, but also all those things I undervalued for so long.

Turns out being studious, observant, introverted, research oriented, calm, quiet, sensitive, shy, and dare I say it, smart...makes for a pretty powerful foundation for business coaching and consulting.

In fact, my two decades of medical experience and academic training have given me the gift of a precise, systematic way to analyze and solve business problems that is uniquely mine.

I'm still exploring what it means to bring 'all of myself' into my business. I've rebranded in the last year under our Pink Coattails brand and encourage all of my women business clients to bring their personalities, in all of their beauty and uniqueness, into their businesses.

When you give yourself permission to be real and understand that by bringing your true self into your business, you'll not only attract your perfect clients, business will cease to be a struggle and truly become a joy.

This means you, and I, have finally come home honey!

There's nothing more real, and more Southern and more comforting than a pan of cornbread, hot from the oven. Sliced open while still steaming and slathered in good creamy grass-fed butter, you'll get a taste of what it's like to feel welcome in your own skin.

About the Author



Dr. Ellen Britt is an award-winning Online Marketing Strategist, Master Interviewer and host of the Pink Coattails podcast...providing information, connections and a voice for women in business, so her listeners can ride in on the 'coattails' of other successful women entrepreneurs. She's produced and hosted more than a dozen telesummits and has interviewed some of today's most well-known and respected names in marketing and self-development. Ellen lives and works just south of Atlanta, Georgia.

Cast Iron Skillet Cornbread



Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients

- 1-cup stone ground Southern yellow cornmeal (I love Autry's)
- 1-cup all-purpose flour (I like White Lily)
- 1-tablespoon sugar
- 1-tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1-cup buttermilk
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted, plus another tablespoon for the skillet
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten

To Make –

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees F.

Heat the 4 Tbls. Butter in a small dish in the microwave until just melted.

In another small bowl, beat both eggs with a fork till blended and nicely yellow.

Place the extra tablespoon of butter in a 9-inch cast iron skillet and place the pan in the 400-degree oven for about 5 minutes (or until you have everything else mixed).

Sift your cornmeal and flour into a medium mixing bowl. Thoroughly mix in the rest of your dry ingredients (sugar, salt and baking powder) into the cornmeal/flour mix.

Scoop a well into the center of the cornmeal/flour mix and pour in the buttermilk.

Next, mix the melted butter into the cold buttermilk in the well, so it will cool the butter down and not curdle the beaten eggs when you stir them in.

Now pour in your beaten eggs and mix everything together with a fork until all of the ingredients are just combined. Be careful not to over mix.

Pull your hot cast iron pan from the oven (don't burn yourself!) Swirl the pan to make sure the melted butter has coated the bottom of the skillet, then quickly scrape all of the cornbread batter into the pan, lightly smoothing the top of the batter with a spatula to make sure it covers the bottom of the pan.

Place the skillet back in the oven and bake for 20 to 25 minutes until the top is a light golden brown.

Slice the cornbread in the skillet, then remove to a cloth lined bowl or basket. Serve with plenty of butter and be sure to eat it while it's still hot. The bottom of each piece should be nicely crusty and brown.

Enjoy y'all...!

The Vision Made Me Hungry.

And Fed Us, Too

by Téa Silvestre Godfrey



The point of no-return loomed just ahead.

The date was circled on my calendar with a thick red Sharpie: May 27th.

If I wanted to cancel my event and owe nothing (other than my \$800 non-refundable deposit), I'd need to do it in the next five weeks.

I had deposits from just seven clients and had sold only two bring-a-friend tickets.

What the heck was going on?

Had I lost my marketing mojo?

I'd marketed and filled all sorts of events before...

For cryin' out loud, I'd directed an entire performing arts and conference center *for years*.

I'd produced multiple virtual events, too.

What was the deal with this one little soirée?

It was painful to think about pulling the plug.

The dream had been growing and gathering steam for nearly three years.

But I always put it off because I was waiting to put down roots.

You needed a local network if you wanted to have an in-person event.

And now that I was in Portland, connecting with folks on a regular basis, it was *time*.

It would be equal parts summer camp, family reunion, business retreat.

I'd help them develop their storytelling skills.

We would cook and eat together.

I saw us all clear as day: gathered in a circle, talking through the muddled bits to get to the clarity.

And then later, in the kitchen, standing elbow to elbow. Chopping vegetables. Stirring pots. Drinking wine. *Laughing*.

The aroma of sizzling onions and garlic keeping us hungry.

And later still, sitting around one big table, passing food family style, and sharing stories.

Revealing our dreams and disappointments.

And deepening our connections in ways that would make all the difference in the days to come.

It was a dream that fed my hunger and I wasn't ready to let it go.

But clients had already bought airline tickets.

At this point, I couldn't even reschedule. It would mean reimbursing them.

And that would likely cost more than just staying the course.

Time to brainstorm other options:

Send personal invitations. (Make a list.)

Give free tickets to local influencers in exchange for sharing with their peeps.

Add a guest speaker with name recognition.

Revisit livestream tickets.

Move to a cheaper location. (Could I find an acceptable place that had a kitchen?)

Attend more local networking opps. Offer folks I meet a discount if they register within 24 hours.

Bump up the Facebook ads.

I looked at my list. Some of these could definitely work!

And I still had time to pump up the marketing. I'd try these and then decide whether or not to cancel.

I threw myself into tackling every idea on my list.

And every idea on my coach's list.

I changed the pricing. (Down.)

I added a discount for bringing a friend.

I asked my colleagues for help spreading the word.

I reached out to a more than a few Portland peeps with some name recognition. (They graciously declined.)

I went through my LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook connections and found every local friend I had.

I wrote and sent them personal invitations and followed up with phone calls. Just three people said yes.

I committed to adding a livestream component and sold 37 tickets at \$19 a pop.

I offered several scholarships.

There are things I did that I don't even remember doing.

And after five long weeks, I still had half the seats left to fill: Just 23 people had registered to be there with us in-person.

At this point, I wasn't even sure I'd break even.

I called up Margot, my connection at the venue.

It looks like we'll have only half the attendees, so we'll need just half the food, I said.

Are there other places in our budget we can trim?

She said she'd take a look...

I hung up the phone and leaned back in my chair.

Eyes closed, I wracked my brain for answers.

How had this event gone so freakin sideways?

I'd done all the things that had worked for me in the past.

Granted, those past events were in another community.

And I'd been a public official then. (It gives you a little more sway with the local press.)

But still.

I was so *sure* I could sell 50 tickets.

A local friend explained that her sunny weekends were precious and that's probably why other Portland folks weren't coming.

Another colleague pointed out that the World Domination Summit never has a shortage of local attendees. So that couldn't possibly be the reason.

Two different audiences, I told her. *And yes, there's some overlap.*

Perhaps our two events were too close together?

Had I overestimated how much of my audience would have the resources to travel to Portland?

Did I underestimate how challenging it would be to fill an in-person event in a new community?

(I'd only lived here for six months.)

All of the above and more.

Live events are tricky little beasts.

People in general don't like to commit until the very last minute. (I knew this going in.)

One thought plopped itself front and center in my head:

If I cancel the group dinner, I could make things work financially.

Ugh.

That option felt even heavier than the idea of losing money.

What about all that work I'd done to find just the right venue? (There are very few NICE locations with a commercial kitchen.)

What about all that marketing I'd done about the group dinner?

My vision *centered* around cooking and eating together.

How could I ever give that up?

A few hours later, Margot called.

Since you won't have as many people, we won't need as many staff. We can cut that part in half, she said.

We also renegotiated the open and close times, trimming another few hours off what I'd need to pay her team.

Those cuts, coupled with the savings on the food, actually gave me hope. I was nearly within reach of breaking even.

It was time to take another look at the dinner menu.

My original plan wasn't on the lavish side. But I was sure there was still room to pare down.

We didn't need the hosted beer-tasting.

We didn't need a lot of appetizers.

But there *was* one item I knew I didn't want to lose: artichokes. They're a crucial piece of my branding and I wanted my guests to have them.

In fact, I'd planned an entire storytelling "lesson" to go with the activity of cleaning and trimming them.

I thought about cutting them in half to make them go further. I thought about cutting them in quarters and using them as garnish.

Then one day, while shopping at World Market, I found a deal on a rather large packet of saffron.

That's it! We'll make Paella.

I wouldn't need to buy 30 fresh artichokes. We'd use marinated hearts from a jar, instead.

And Paella has so many ingredients that I'll have a prep task for everyone.

So I set to work on my shopping list and finished up my event prep.

Swag bags for the guests were assembled.

Handouts were printed.

A trip to Costco was made.

And in the end, 26 people gathered for an intimate weekend of storytelling, business insights, and clarity.

One very dear client came all the way from Australia.

We had yoga breaks together. We hiked.

We laughed together. We cried together.

And we cooked and ate together.

It was *exactly* the experience I'd hoped for.

In fact, three guests decided to join my year-long coaching program, the [Digital Dining Room](#).

And the very best part?

Realizing, in the end, that the perfect number of people showed up.

Two dozen was just the right size. Any more, and people would've had a hard time connecting with everyone.

Any more, and we wouldn't have fit in the kitchen.

My vision for next year? It's stronger than ever!

Perhaps you'll join us?

About the Author



Tea Silvestre Godfrey is the founder of many things, some of which are still alive and kicking: [Story Bistro](#), [Prosperity's Kitchen](#), [Word Carnivals](#), and this site (Butter and Beast). She's the author of "[Attract and Feed a Hungry Crowd](#)," and the publisher of "[30 Ways to Bloom Your Online Relationships](#)." She helps professional and creative solopreneurs tell better stories about their businesses, so they can connect with their perfect people and change the world.

Spanish Paella



NOTE: If you need to trim your menu budget (like we did), eliminate the shrimp. Ours was plenty tasty without it. And for a vegetarian version, substitute a soy-based sausage and lots of mushrooms.

Ingredients:

Marinade

- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 1/4 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- Juice of two lemons
- 2 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/4 teaspoons pepper

Paella

- 8 chicken thighs, skinned in cut into bite size pieces
- 15 large prawns (28 – 31 count)

3 chorizo sausages, cut in small pieces
2 large onions, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 red bell pepper, roasted and diced
2 1/2 cups Arborio rice
4 cups chicken broth (more if needed)
5 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 1/4 teaspoons saffron thread
1.5 cups white wine (more if needed)
1.5 cups frozen peas, rinsed in hot tap water
18 ounces artichoke hearts
4 tablespoons parsley, chopped
2 lemons, zested
1.5 cups parmesan cheese, grated

Preparations

THE NIGHT BEFORE: In a bowl, combine the olive oil, lemon juice, Italian seasoning, garlic, salt and pepper. In two separate containers, add the marinade to the chicken and the prawns. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

1. Cut the red pepper, removing the seeds and slice into 4 sections. In the oven (475) or over the grill, roast the peppers until charred, about 12 – 15 minutes. Remove the pepper to a bowl and place a plate over it to steam the veggies for about 10 – 15 minutes. Remove the skin and slice into strips. Set aside in a baggie.
2. Remove the chicken from the marinade, reserving the marinade. Heat about 1 T of the marinade in a skillet over medium high heat and cook the chicken until lightly brown. Remove the chicken to a plate.
3. Add the sausage to the pan and cook over medium heat until well browned. Remove to the plate.
4. Add a bit of the reserved marinade to the skillet and add the onions and garlic. Cook until soft. Stir in the rice and brown slightly.
5. Remove the onions/rice mixture to a paella pan. Using part of the chicken stock, deglaze the skillet and add the liquid to the rice.

6. Add the rest of the broth, tomatoes, saffron threads, chicken and sausage. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally until rice is tender.
7. Cover the peas with warm water for about 10 minutes to bring them to room temperature. Drain.
8. Add white wine, peas, lemon zest, and artichoke hearts; toss gently.
9. Drain shrimp; push into rice mixture. Add the sliced red pepper.
10. Bake, covered in 350 oven for 15 – 20 minutes, or until shrimp are pink.
11. Garnish with parsley, lemon slices and Parmesan cheese.

Servings: 10