

I like to consider myself an optimist. I've always been somebody that's been able to see the glass half full, the silver lining in things, and just really pulling the lessons or the goodness out of any situation. Any situation. Even when we first started our business, Armario, was the name of our brick and mortar store, and how it started was my business partner and I, my best friend, Vanessa, and I were burned out and frustrated in our corporate jobs. So we decided one weekend kind of on a whim that we were going to go up to New York City to the gift show. If you've ever been up there to this ... If you're listening to this and you've ever been to the gift show, New York Now, I think it used to be called the New York Gift Show. This thing is fricking huge. It is like, I can't even tell you how many buildings. It's at the Javits Center. It's down by the pier. It's like all over the place.

And we go there. It was a Saturday, Vanessa registered us to go, we actually used her mother-in-law's tax ID number to say, this is where we worked for Sally Goode Antiques. And we used that to get into the show because you need to have ... And we went there and we were like, oh my God, this is our dream. And the show and thinking, wouldn't it be great to not work in corporate anymore? Wouldn't it be great to not wake up every day and feel frustrated and feel like you're just dragging yourself into the car, fighting traffic and going to sit in a windowless office, which is exactly what we had. We had no windows in our offices, with rodents in the ceiling, no joke, and just feeling like every day like, oh my God, is there more to life than this?

So as we walked around the show, we're looking at things and I was like, "Oh, wouldn't it be amazing if we were entrepreneurs? Wouldn't it be amazing if we had our own business and we could do our own thing?" And she looks at me and she said, "I would love that because Theresa, I am miserable. I am absolutely stressed out and miserable." And I looked at her and I said, "We can totally do this. We can absolutely do it. How hard could it be? How hard could it be to build a retail store? How hard could it be to have a brick and mortar business?" So fast-forward a little, Armario was born, and Armario is Spanish for closet. And our tagline was Better Than Your Best Friend's Closet. And we started this business while we were working full time, and it was hard as heck. It was hard as heck because we're working full time, we're still frustrated in a very toxic environment. And we go to our business Thursday night, Friday night, all day Saturday, all day Sunday, no time, no downtime in between to build our dream.

And eventually we ended up going from being an online business, getting that going, and then finally opening up our own brick and mortar business. We started the online business in 2008, going into 2009, and we opened up our first brick and mortar business, 2011. And when we first started our online business, we were like, okay, we can do this. We can do it in conjunction with working full time and being stressed. And we got this. And then when I had my dissection in 2011, my dissection in my neck, we were sitting there one day, I was off from work and we're sitting outside at a restaurant and it was me and her and her husband. And we look across the street and we were like, "Oh my gosh, there's a building for rent. There's space for rent, cute store." Next thing you know, we opened up our first brick and mortar business in 2011, and again, worked full time while ... And mortar business and continuing our website and continuing to grow our dream.

And the stress was like ... Knew that the stress of working where we were working was funding the business because we would put a portion of our paychecks into a bank account that helped fund our business because we weren't in it full time yet. And we worked our butts off and then decided to leave corporate America in 2014 and go full time into the brick and mortar business. And at the same time, I had started to build my consulting business in 2012. But when we looked around and we saw all these local business owners who had kind of done the same thing, where they had worked full time, I mean, several of them took their 401(k) and all the money that they had saved in retirement, and that's what they used to start their business, that's what they used to fund their business.

So now they're putting everything in dream and they also have nothing on the other end, no safety net, no nothing. And putting all of their effort into building this business. And Vanessa and I kind of had done it differently where we were taking a portion of our paychecks, a very small portion, putting it into the business so we had a cushion so that we could keep our business going. But when we went into the brick and mortar business, our retail store full time, the consulting business was funding the store, and we were doing everything possible to get it going and to bring new customers in. And we constantly felt like we couldn't get our heads above water with the store. And as we looked around, again, we saw all these local businesses that were doing the same thing, just trying to keep their head above water while they watched all of their life savings just keep going out the door, whether it was to pay people or it was just funding the business while they could get things up and running.

And as I've coached people over the years, I tell them entrepreneurship is not for the faint of heart, but it takes a little while until you can get your rhythm, number one, but also until you can really start to see, having a loss in your business every year, to actually starting to see some profits, if you do things the right way. There's three things that you actually need to put into place in order to not just feel like you're constantly surviving, but to actually start to see a light at the end of the tunnel and start to see your business turn a profit. It might be a small profit in the beginning, but at least turn a profit. And I tell people, it takes a good 18 months to 3 years if you are indeed really in it full time.

And actually, when we opened up, we had one brick and mortar business, and we opened up our second brick and mortar business in a different town. And I watched, Vanessa's husband used to always get on our case constantly about our expenses and about inventory and costs and time, la, la, la. And Vanessa and I would just kept saying, "It's fine, it's fine. We'll be fine." Because we still had a little bit of a cushion with the consulting business. But I also saw a friend of mine who had a store, she started the same time, opened up her store. It was brand new, started at the same time that we moved into our space in this new town. And I remember having this conversation with her of just constantly feeling like you're behind the ball and you're just surviving, barely surviving. And it took a good three years until things started to turn around for her. And then unfortunately, by that time, COVID was starting and it was just kind of like, oh my gosh, what are we going to do?

But here's the thing, I want you to know, and even though we ended up closing our doors because we were struggling in the business and we were struggling to get things going and we had just left corporate America, and we were trying so hard to move things forward. And just again, we just felt that this business was on life support. And then Vanessa got sick and we ended up closing our doors because I wasn't going to do it by myself. But again, I continued the consulting business and saw business after business after business, just having that, the business owner putting all their energy and effort and everything into their business, thinking that they needed to be all end all and do everything themselves. Again, watching their retirement that they had, or even the money that they made just go out the door, just like my friend.

She worked her butt off, her and her mother had this business, and she was there, she must have worked like 80 hour weeks. I mean, she was sick all the time. She was just doing everything and anything possible just to bring customers through her door. I mean, she fought because I helped her out with a bunch of stuff. And she would fight me on technology, doing social media or building up her website. And because she was like, "I just need to get people in the door. I just need to get people in the door. If I do that, I can't focus on getting people in the door." And she just kept going with that until she started doing things a little bit differently, which is what we're going to talk about.

There's three big things, three big things that I coach people on all the time because Vanessa and I made this mistake ourselves, and I've seen countless people when I start working with them doing the same thing. And this goes for whether you're a local business who is solely online or you still have a brick and

mortar business. These three things are so common that people do, and I'm going to give you what you need to do instead.

So the first one is you need to get out of the middle of everything. That is the biggest thing. The biggest thing that people want, business owners want, entrepreneurs want is freedom. Freedom of time, mental freedom, peace of mind, and also just that financial freedom. And if you're in the middle of everything, trying to control everything, and in the weeds, you need to get the mower out and you need to mow those weeds down because you are the bottleneck. You are the absolute bottleneck.

I remember there was a man that owned a store right behind us, in the second town that we were with our brick and mortar business. It was like a florist type thing, but it was a gift shop, and it used to be all just florist. And then when he bought it and took it over, he changed it. And I remember he did everything. He was there at 6:30 in the morning and he left at 9:00 at night, and he was in the middle of everything. And I remember having countless conversations with him where he was so burned out, took all of his 401(k), his 401(k) was gone, invested it in the business, and couldn't get anything out of it. So here's the thing. And I remember saying to him, "Look, you need to stop being the be all end all. You need to get out in the middle of it and hire some good people because you are the bottleneck. You're the bottleneck for the energy that needs to flow through the business so that the business can be successful."

But number two, going along with this is you need to focus on finding good people, a self-led team of people, a growth focused team of people. So getting out of the middle, you're going to have to do some prep work. You're going to have to take a look at how you do things and how you want to teach somebody to do it the way that you would do it. What kind of processes did you set up in your business, whether it's doing deposits. I keep having this conversation about deposits with people lately. But doing deposits, or purchasing, or how you handle customers when they come in the door, or whatever it is, how you handle customers when you book a consult call with them. So doing some prep work first and saying, okay, this is how I do it. This is how I want it done. And then I'm going to train, I'm going to hire, I'm going to find and retain good people, and I'm going to have these processes all documented so I can teach them how to do it.

And again, they can then come back and give their input, give the thing ... Just bumped my mic, I was getting so excited. Give their input as far as things that they think can be added to it to make it better. But again, you are out of the middle of it. If you're in the middle of it, you can't see that 30,000 foot view of where you want to take your business and what's really happening in your business. You need to mow down the weeds and you need to get out of them so that you can see clearly and have the right people in place that can then do things the way that you would do them, but also have some extra added creativity and ideas that can help things be done better.

And then the third thing is that kind of goes along with this, is not just building, not just putting yourself out there on Facebook, not just putting yourself out there on Instagram, but having a 360 degree marketing plan that is built on you and your business ... Connection that you want to make with your ideal customer. It's not just about slapping posts up there just for the heck of it. It's about how are you going to connect customer on a deeper level? You connect with them live. But then the digital experience is how can you build that live experience and how you connect with them live into using digital technology, whether it's social media, or email list building, lead generation, doing live videos, or whatever that looks like, you want to make sure that you have that 360 degree. So many people get myopic and they think, oh, I just need ... Page and I'm good. Or I need to just put Google Ads out there and I'm good. No ... Not be doing things that will consistently build the connection and relationship with the people that you serve.

So if you focus on these three things, you'll stop feeling like you're just surviving. But you'll start seeing that you're turning a profit. You'll start seeing that things are a little bit more streamlined, and that you're getting yourself out there. More people are coming in because you're more visible. More people are coming in because you're seeing the authentic you and the authentic what your business is really about. People will start booking calls, people will join your programs because they start seeing more of who you are. And if you want to learn how to do this on an even deeper level, and if you want to learn how to get yourself out of this, and saying how to really change your perspective on what your role as a business owner and a CEO of your business really needs to build, and how you can build from the inside out, from the inside of your business out, then definitely get on the wait list for my business advisory ...

Local business advisory board that we're going to be opening up the doors for very, very soon, and sending out information of how you can join this exclusive small group of people that I will be guiding, I will be working with you, but you'll be working with each other to hold each other accountable, to let go and get out of the middle, to build a self-led, high impact growth focused team in your business. And to also really focus on what does that 360 degree marketing look like, taking into consideration lead generation, and social media, and all of those things to build that deeper connection.

If you want to do that, then you need to join me in the Business Advisory Board. It's going to be amazing. It is my 20 plus years in working in entrepreneurial businesses and my 10 plus years working with local businesses. Combining all of that together so that I can help you achieve more, achieve all of the things that you've been wanting to achieve, and COVID held us back, and then the economy is potentially holding you back right now. Let all that go so that you can be successful on your own terms. So if you go to theresacantley.com/waitlist, get on the wait list so that when we open the doors or when we send out notification about this amazing group, you will know about it first.

So until next time, thank you for joining me. And remember, building a business, it's hard, but you don't have to always feel like you're just surviving. It's hard, but doing that hard work and really focusing on what needs to be done is going to help you to build success, to feel successful, to feel affluent on your terms. Not feeling like you're just surviving every day and you feel like you're drowning every day, but to actually feel like you're soaring and living life to the fullest. All right, bye for now.