

caroline greene

*the*  
DETERMINED MOM'S GUIDE

# next

HOW TO START A  
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS  
THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU  
AND YOUR FAMILY



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**NEXT**

**How to Start a Successful Business  
That's Right for You and Your Family**

By Caroline Greene

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Kindle Publishing Package

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# Dedication

To my husband, who saw and loved my true self  
before I even knew she existed.  
I love you, always and forever, no matter what.

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# Introduction: To My Fellow Mompreneurs

To My Fellow Mompreneurs,

I'm a straight-talking truth-teller who believes in always saying what you mean and meaning what you say. So before we go any further, I think you should know that I don't have any business writing this book.

Seriously.

I don't have an MBA. I have been in business for just over a year. I have a *tiny* email list. I am a recovering lawyer, for goodness' sake! In fact, I am the last person I would *ever* pick to write a book about growing a successful business.

I *never* thought I'd own a business, let alone write a book about growing one. Sure, when I was on maternity leave with my first daughter, I *dreamt* about *having* a business. Who doesn't want to be their own boss? But when I thought about actually *starting* one, I got totally overwhelmed. What would I sell? How would I sell it? And, good Lord, who wants to be in sales anyway? It all just seemed like a whole lot of risk for not that big of a reward.

I'm not kidding. I look at FedEx trucks like they're magical fairies. *Magical. Fairies.* I watch them pull up with their packages with their bright, crisp logos and their smiling happy drivers, and I think to myself, *How does that even happen?* I mean, who makes sure the trucks meet the planes at the right time? Who designed the software that made sure packages are tracked, sorted, and shipped correctly? What happens when one of the drivers doesn't show up? Or when they get a flat tire? Does AAA fix that? How do they pick an ad campaign? How do they get an advertising agency? How do they get someone to choose Fed-Ex over UPS? Who prints their boxes? Where are they printed? What happens when they want to create a new logo? Do they then recall all the old boxes? Or do they just leave them out there? I could keep going if you want. *The point is, running a business had always seemed head-splittingly difficult and annoying and totally, absolutely not for me.*

So why should you bother to read this book instead of the other thousand out there about growing businesses? *Because running a business had always seemed head-splittingly difficult and annoying and totally, absolutely not for me.*

And yet, in less than a year, I took an idea that started as something to keep my brain occupied while I stayed home with my kids, morphed into a hobby, and then transformed it into a real business that is on track to provide me as much as I was making as an associate at a major law firm.

More importantly, *I'm happy*. Super happy. Sure, I have bad days. I wake up tired and grumpy sometimes. I snap at my kids sometimes. After all, I'm still *human*. But gone are the Sunday nights spent dreading Monday mornings and gone are the Thursdays and Fridays spent just waiting for the weekends. Now I have a business I love, serving people I love, with balance that's right for me and my family.

I'm not just growing my business. *I'm transforming my life*.

And I believe you can, too.

The ultimate question for highly-motivated, determined women like us isn't whether we *can* build successful businesses. We both know we're driven enough, capable enough, and resourceful enough to accomplish just about anything we set our minds to. *The question for us is whether we'll be brave enough, bold enough, and confident enough to actually build the successful business we want*. Not the one that can make us the most money. Not the one that leverages our past experience and education in the "smartest" ways. Not the one our former mentor or professor or boss thinks we'd be great at. Not the one our old business school friend wants to help out with. Not the one our husbands think would be a no-brainer for us to knock out of the park. *But the one we actually want*.

In order to do that, we don't need a typical business coach or a typical business book. *We need someone to help us get super clear on what we truly want and why we truly want it, and then hold us ruthlessly and compassionately accountable to our own vision*.

And that's precisely what this book does.

So, here I am. About a year into my business. Sharing what I know with honesty, humor, and compassion (for both of us!). Even though I'm not a business expert. And even though what I've written about here hasn't been tested beyond my own business and with the clients currently testing it in theirs. Because I believe the information in this book has the capacity to launch people's businesses, and change their lives. And if I'm right, who am I to keep that to myself?

On the pages that follow, you'll find the ten NEXT Steps I use to help my clients and me grow businesses and build lives that are right for us and our families. I hope they help you do the same.

# Chapter 1: Your Business

I've recently come face to face with some incredibly painful truths about my journey as a business owner. And, honestly, while they've all been fairly difficult to unpack, perhaps the most painful one has been acknowledging that I haven't actually been in business as long as I thought I had.

I used to mark my entrepreneurial anniversary by the day I launched my first website or maybe when I started handing out those gorgeous letterpress business cards of mine. But, as I've come to learn, there is a huge difference between *looking* like you have a business and actually *having* one. And, no, it's not about how much money you're making.

If you want to know if you have a business, simply ask yourself these two questions:

1. Have I created something sellable?
2. Am I taking consistent, meaningful action towards selling it?

If you answered yes to both, then you have or are creating a business. If you answered no to even one, well, then you either don't really want a business or simply aren't ready for one – at least not yet.

The first time I thought I wanted a business, I had been on maternity leave for about six months. I wasn't sure I wanted to be a lawyer anymore, I didn't really want to be a stay-at-home mom for long, and I had no idea what else I could or should be thinking about doing. But when people asked me what was next for me, I didn't want to say, "Well, when I think about going back to my career as a lawyer, I want to throw up a little bit in the back of my mouth. But when I think of doing something else I get totally overwhelmed. I mean, I'm not about to get a mediocre job with mediocre hours doing mediocre work so I can't have a vacation and barely cover the cost of my nanny. I'm hoping I'll figure it out eventually." Instead, I'd smile and reply, "Well, I'm really not sure, but I'm working on a few business ideas."

Their eyebrows would arch with excitement. "Oh!" they'd say over their Chardonnay, "Can you tell me what it is? Or is it too early?" And suddenly I wasn't "just" a lost, exhausted, overwhelmed mom struggling with depression, sleep-deprivation, and a total loss of identity while away from work. *I was an entrepreneur!* I had ideas! I was going to do big things! And, not only that, *I was a mompreneur!* I was going to create a business that would be wildly successful *and* be right for me and my family!



There was only one problem. I wasn't actually ready. Not really. Not yet. Even though I didn't know it at the time, what I most wanted at that stage in my journey was something to make me feel more important, something to make me feel like I *mattered*. My decision to stop working and take some time at home with my daughters had stripped me of my former identity. I wanted a distraction. Or a hobby. Some sort of purpose. What I didn't want was an actual business.

Even after I thought I had "gotten serious" about my business, I spent most of my first year just being *busy*. Of course, I didn't think that at the time. I thought I was taking steps to "organically grow" my coaching practice in a way that felt authentic to me. But in reality, *I had chosen busyness over a business*.

So, where did I go wrong?

I created a product (a coaching package), *but I didn't take meaningful action toward selling it*.

**Meaningful action is reaching out to potential clients in concrete, relational ways to see if your product offers a solution to *their* problem.**

What I did (and what many new business owners do) was *busywork* – work that didn't actually relate to *getting new or returning business*.

Here's what I mean: When I was ready to start my coaching business, the first thing I did was build a website. I spent countless hours on WordPress tinkering with the heading, changing colors, playing with fonts, and getting everything right.

Next, I got a logo. But not just any logo, an *amazing* logo. Because I was 100 percent sure that, after my website, my logo was most crucial to my success. I didn't get a simple logo for a reasonable sum. Nope. Instead, I took my \$2500 budget and hired a *real* designer. We had long, in-depth conversations about my business and who I was helping and what I was trying to do in the world. And, after a few disasters and a lot of hours, the designer finally gave me a perfectly fine logo.

Then we laid out business cards. But not just any business card, *beautiful* letter-pressed business cards on the thickest cardstock available. Because I was 100 percent sure that, after my website and my logo, my business cards were most crucial to my success.

Of course, I also tackled the technical stuff, like getting business insurance, forming my LLC, and getting a corporate bank account.

Put it all together, sprinkle some Facebook posts about it, and guess what? I *looked* like I was on fire!

When people asked me how my new business was going, I would smile a huge, genuine smile and say, "It's going so great! Want to see my new business cards?" And they'd take one and always agree that they were the most beautiful business cards they had ever seen.

There was only one problem. Then they'd hand them back to me.

Something inside of me would go all twisty. *Don't you want to keep it?* I'd wonder silently. *Don't you want to send me clients and help me revolutionize the world?* Apparently not, because there was no miraculous flow of clients. People were not taking my cards or going to my website. Besides a handful of word-of-mouth referrals, there was no "organic growth." In fact, there was very little growth at all. Sure, I got a client here or there. And I served them well. But it wasn't a sustainable flow and it didn't look much like a business.

I was so confused! In my heart, I knew I was an outstanding coach, so I tried to keep up the smile. I even kept showing people business cards that they kept handing back to me. But, as the months wore on, it was harder and harder to keep up the façade that I had a successful business.

Did I respond by revising what I offered, or by creating a more sellable product and selling it? Nope. Three months after my first launch, *I rebranded completely*. Yup. That's right. Started over from scratch.

I didn't know what else to do!

I wasn't getting the results I wanted. I wasn't attracting the number of clients I wanted. And the only thing I knew how to fix was my messaging about what I was offering, and my website. So that's what I did. I hired Janet Pashleigh – the same person who did Martha Beck's website – to do mine (she's an amazing designer, by the way). I got an entirely new logo and an entirely new website and entirely new business cards.

Want to know how many new clients I got from all of that time, money, and effort – *both times*? Approximately *zero*.

Why? Because even though I did a ton of work and spent a ton of money, none of it included actually reaching out to potential clients in concrete, relational ways to see if my product offered a solution to their problem. None of it was *meaningful action*.

**What I didn't understand was that businesses grow because they sell things. Not because they are shiny and pretty.**

We *think* shiny-pretty is important. But, in fact, shiny-pretty is just fun. It's *lagniappe* – a little something extra. And, as Dr. Angela Lauria constantly tells me, you can totally have that. But if you want a successful business, do it *after you create something sellable and sell it*.

So, it's time to get wholly honest with yourself about your own business, beloved. Because, as hard as it may be, we can always work with the truth, no matter what it is. In the end, truth always leads to the best outcomes. Maybe not the outcomes we thought we wanted or the outcomes we secretly want other people to *think* we want – but the *best* outcomes, for us and our families.

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want a *business*.
- I want *busyness*.

## Chapter 2: Your Motivation

Now you know that the not-so-secret secret to having a successful business is having a sellable product and taking meaningful action toward selling it. Right about now you're going to desperately want to start working on what you're going to sell and who you're going to sell it to. In fact, you may even want to skip ahead to the next chapters and get to work. But, trust me, you need to read this chapter about your motivations first.

That may seem counter-intuitive. As business owners, we're often told to identify what we want and *then* figure out why we want it. But I believe that it's much more important to know *why* we want to have a business before we've even identified *what* type of business we want to have or *what* product we want to sell, especially for determined moms like us.

As one overachiever to another, I'm confident that you have a myriad of products that you *could* sell. In fact, we could probably spend a few hours and come up with a hundred different variations of things you *could* offer. But that's not the issue here. What we want to do is figure out what product will generate business that's right for you and your family. Figuring out *why* you want to sell in the first place will help us do just that.

If you jump right into developing your product, you may very well end up with a successful business. But you might not end up having the *life* you want or being the *whole person* you want to be.

Let's look at Karen, a successful consultant who had taken a step back from her career to spend more time with her children. While at home, Karen received a lucrative opportunity to return to the private sector, but instead chose to take her passion for throwing beautiful parties and transform it into a business. With her contacts and grit, Karen was incredibly successful and quickly reached a net income that rivaled what she had been making in the private sector. There was only one problem: *She was miserable*. She was working over 60 hours a week, sleeping less than four hours a night, snapping at her husband and kids, and sucking all the love and fun out of what had been one of her most favorite things.

Karen had successfully created *what* she wanted – a successful party business. *But she had lost touch with why she wanted it in the first place*: to spend more time with her family and have fun, even if that meant making only a small profit.

As a result, even though Karen had a successful business by her friends', colleagues', and even her husband's standards, *she didn't feel successful*. She felt exhausted, frustrated, and overwhelmed.

Karen's story beautifully illustrates why it's so important to understand your motivations when building your business. **Owning your motivation empowers you to define what "success" looks like to you.**

So, how do you do that?

First, we start with why you want to start (or why you started) your business in the first place. This is what I call your *primary motivation*. To identify it, simply ask yourself this question: What keeps me coming back to my business or business idea day after day, even when I think I absolutely, positively cannot do it anymore?

Whatever the answer is, that's your primary motivation. That's why everything you're doing is worth it to you. Of course, that doesn't mean there aren't other motivations at play. But after you own your *primary motivation*, we can quickly order and assess your remaining *secondary motivations* and create a *motivational checklist* to ensure that every single decision you make aligns 100 percent with why you want a business in the first place.

Karen's motivational checklist looked something like this:

1. Family
2. Joy
3. Service
4. Money
5. A touch of fame!

Why create a checklist? Because it's crucial to remember that *we can't serve all of our motivations at the same time*. If we do, we'll either get swept up like Karen did, or we'll get stuck spinning, like I did in my first year.

When I first launched my coaching practice, my motivations were:

1. Service – I wanted to help people.
2. Family – I wanted to be present for my children, including being available for pick-ups, etc.
3. Money – I wanted to make around \$80,000 a year.
4. Message – I wanted to help reshape the outrageous expectations of perfection we have for mothers today.
5. Fame – I may or may not have wanted to get on *The Today Show* – you know, as a bonus for my efforts!

But I made the all-too-common mistake of trying to serve all of them at once! And, when I did, I fell into a nasty, paralyzing, somewhat amusing thought storm that looked like this:

- If I want to serve people, then why am I trying to charge them? Shouldn't I do this for free as an act of service? Maybe I should just start a non-profit. Or be a pastor. Maybe I'm really called to be a pastor. I should just go to seminary. (Truth: I enrolled in seminary three weeks after my first business launch!)
- If I want to be there for my family, then I should only work from nine a.m. to three p.m. four or five days a week. I can't be the mom I want to be and work 80-hour weeks again! If I wanted to do that I'd just go back to the firm. Besides, I don't need to make money, so what's wrong with only having a few clients? I should just be grateful for the business I have now, even though it's not working very well. After all, it's more than most new coaches seem to have.
- If I want to make money, I can't coach people around their spirituality. It's too sacred! So I should coach on something else. What should I coach people on? I have no idea. I have nothing else to offer! Why did I even think I wanted to do this? I guess I should be okay with working and not making any money.
- If I want to change the culture of motherhood, I'd better coach people about how to redefine what it means to be a good mom. But people don't actually want to spend time and money learning how to be better moms by striving less and practicing self-care more. So I guess I should switch my message instead.
- If I want to get on *The Today Show*, I need to write a book. But how can I continue to serve people and make money while I'm writing it? And how in the hell can I do all of that without neglecting my marriage and kids? I should just stop now.

See the spin cycle?

When we commit to more than one master, we end up with nothing. As Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and money." That's actually amazing business advice, whether you're a religious person or not.

*Divided attention does not get results.*

That doesn't mean you can't love God *and* have money. And it certainly doesn't mean you can't have a business that serves others, makes money, *and* is right for your family. *It just means you have to choose what your primary motivation is and commit to it 100 percent.* Then you can rank your remaining motivations accordingly so that you have a clear lens through which to prioritize your next steps and take meaningful action.

Once I realized my primary motivation was service, ranked my other motivations accordingly, and started applying my motivational checklist to *every* decision I was making in my business, I started serving more people, making more money, spreading my message more freely, getting a (slightly) bigger following, and spending *more* stress-free, phone-free, worry-free hours with my children than I had all year.

By getting super clear on why I was doing what I was doing, I was able to achieve 1,000 times more than I had before!

I don't believe that you can take meaningful action when you're motivated by everything at once, especially in less than 40 hours a week. In fact, you'll end up working closer to 60 and get very little accomplished. *All because you're trying to satisfy all of your motivations at once instead of picking the one you truly value the most.*

Here are a few more examples.

Rachel was a successful professional who was dissatisfied with her job. When we began coaching, she was sure she wanted to start her own business. But every time she tried to make strides as an entrepreneur, she felt incredibly stressed. Together, we teased out what her primary motivation was: *joy*. More than anything, Rachel wanted to experience joy in her everyday life. Once that motivator was in place, Rachel could quickly rank her remaining motivations: *family, mission, money*.

When we examined her current professional situation, Rachel realized that she could experience the most joy and best serve her motivational chain by staying in her current job. Together we worked out strategies for Rachel to experience more joy in her day-to-day life. Within weeks, she had developed a plan for enjoying her current job *and she had more paying clients in her coaching business* – all because she was living according to a definition of success that was right for *her and her family*.

Erica had a private accounting practice. When we first spoke, she was charging her clients hourly and was willing to do non-accounting work to get the extra hours. Her client base was growing rapidly, but she wasn't sure how to create a more predictable and steady income stream. Together, we assessed that Erica's key motivation was *joy*. The rest of her key motivational chain was *money, family, and message*. Very quickly, we were able to create packaged offerings that enabled Erica to charge more, do more work that she enjoyed and less of what she didn't, and help her identify and work with clients who would value her unique approach. Within months, Erica's schedule was booked up and she was happier and more effective than she had been before. She was similarly living in accordance with a definition of success that was right for *her and her family*.

By picking a primary motivation and ranking our remaining motivations accordingly, we give ourselves a lens through which to clearly assess our objectives, plan, and (on good days)

choose daily actions so that *everything* we do – starting with what we *sell* – is deeply aligned with our true motivations.

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one motivation as your true, primary motivation:

- Service
- Money
- Message
- Mission
- Joy
- Fame
- Family
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

Then rank your remaining motivations to complete your motivational checklist.



## Chapter 3: Your Ideal Client

Now you know that you want a business and you know *why* you want a business. You've taken two amazing steps! It's time to start digging into who you're meant to serve.

Whether you're building widgets or working with individual clients, your business *serves* someone. And not just anyone, but a specific type of person with a specific type of problem. We need to help you remember who that is. I say "remember" because I deeply believe that we already know who we're called to help. We just might not want to remember. I certainly didn't, at first.

About a year ago, the Vicar of Baghdad came to speak at my church. He is an amazing man with an amazing story. He told of how he responded to the call to leave a safe, secure job at a suburban church and go plant what is now the only remaining Christian church in the heart of war-torn Baghdad. His stories broke me open like I've never been broken open before. My sobs rocked me so hard, a friend had to come over and physically hold me. At the end of his speech, he said, "What I did may seem hard to you. But it was much better than being at a church in suburbia. That would just be *so boring.*"

He was half-joking, of course, but it made me cry even harder. Because I would so much rather go to Baghdad and fight a heroic battle than stay in the outskirts of D.C. and help well-educated women who no one seems to think need help but me. Sitting there, snot-covered on that wooden pew, I realized that I had been given a gift. I had been given eyes to see the brokenness, frustration, and travails of women just like you in cities and suburbs just like mine. *I had been entrusted with people to love and serve.*

But still I rebelled. I didn't want *those* people! I wanted people who would make *me* look good! I wanted to take water to children in Africa or help start a movement to alleviate systemic oppression. It might be terrible to say, but it was true! I was all "Pick me! Pick me!" right up until I was actually chosen. Then I went all Jonah. You know, the guy in the Old Testament who was all too willing to serve God, until he got a call to do something he didn't want to do? He ended up in the belly of a whale for three days before he was finally willing to listen. All too often, something holds us back from serving the people who need us most. We ignore what's right in front of us in order to create a market or niche or service that *we* think will do the greatest good or make the most money, when really we're just trying to dodge the call we've already received.

So, how do we stop running and start serving who we are meant to serve?

Well, there are entire books full of exercises that promise to help you find your people. Generally speaking, they guide you through exercises to sketch out a detailed description of who your “ideal client” is, down to where they shop, what music they listen to, where they live, how many children they have, etc. – almost like a character sketch for writing a novel. I’ve done them. I have friends and colleagues who have done them. And they are definitely helpful. (If you’re interested, my favorite exercises are in Michael Port’s *Book Yourself Solid*.) Most of them take the general idea of who you want to serve and help you refine it until you have a clear image of who that person is, what problem they have, and how you’re going to help them solve it. For example, “women in transition” becomes “women whose partners have cheated on them and who are trying to decide whether to stay or leave the marriage” or “women who are dissatisfied with their career path and want to find more meaningful work.”

The problem I’ve encountered and that I often see with my clients is that unless you have an idea of who your ideal client might be from the outset, it is incredibly difficult to *think* your way into your ideal client. If you haven’t already committed to “women in transition,” it’s virtually impossible to whittle that down to “women who are dissatisfied with their career path and want to find more meaningful work.”

To the contrary, when overachieving women sit down and *think* about who their ideal clients might be, their list expands dramatically rather than narrows. If we sat down right now, I’m pretty sure we could sketch ten different ideal client profiles with problems you are totally equipped and able to solve. But we still wouldn’t know which one would be right for *you*.

So, what should you do if you have no idea who your ideal client might be?

**Take your best guess and start selling.**

By doing that, in practically no time, we’ll know whether or not you’ve picked the right ideal client profile for you. If what you’re selling sells and you feel awesome, then we know you’re on the right track. If it sells and you feel weird, then we know we have some more work to do. If it doesn’t sell at all, we’ve got lots of work to do! Regardless of the outcome, we’re out of your head and actually making progress. *We’re taking meaningful action.*

Let’s go back to Rachel. When Rachel did her ideal client profiles, she came up with tons of different people she *could* serve, but none that she knew she *wanted* to serve. After we spent an entire session talking about nothing but who her ideal client might be, I told Rachel to go sell something. She was shocked. I was just going to make her blindly choose to sell *anything*?! Yup. And she did it. The next week she came back and told me what she had confirmed: *None of her ideal client profiles were right for her.* It was great news! Why? Because Rachel had been *thinking* about offering a coaching around those client profiles for months, if not longer, but when she actually tried selling something to one of them, she could quickly see that she wasn’t on the right track.

Then the coolest thing happened.

With those “wrong” ideal client profiles out of the way, Rachel started making more meaningful offers and making sales and she even increased her rates – all within a few *weeks*. She even paid back the cost of coaching with me before her package with me was completed! By clearing out what wasn’t working for her, Rachel made room for what was. It was amazing to watch unfold.

The same was true for Karen. As Karen refocused her business to align with her primary motivation, we worked through a detailed ideal client profile based on one of her favorite clients. When we were done, she was closer than she had ever been to having a clear idea of who she wanted to serve. A few weeks and twelve parties later, Karen realized that it still wasn’t quite right. So, guess what? We refined it. And when her business grows beyond that ideal client profile, we’ll revise it again.

I’ve redone my ideal client profile probably a dozen times. And even though I get closer and closer to knowing who I most want to serve, I know I’ll never get it perfectly “right.” The truth is, there is no right when it comes to defining our ideal clients. There is only *good enough for right now*. As long as we have enough information about our clients to create sellable products and take meaningful action toward selling to them, we know we’re on the right track.

*So here’s your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want to *start selling*.
- I want to *wait* until I’ve defined the perfect ideal client.

## Chapter 4: Your Product

Now it's time to start talking about your *sellable* product. Remember, we're not just creating anything. We want to create something that people will actually buy. To do that, the first thing we need to be sure of is that it's a product that *solves a problem*.

That is worth repeating. **In order to come up with what you're going to sell, start with the problem your business will solve for your ideal client.**

For example, I'm writing this book with the help of Difference Press. They make sure I write a book that makes a difference. I'm going to run-walk a half-marathon with the help of Jill Angie of Not Your Average Runner. She makes sure I'll complete that race. And I help determined women like you start successful businesses that are right for you and your family.

Each of those businesses is clearly identifiable by *the problem it solves*. Their descriptions don't focus on the people or companies that are doing the selling. *They describe the solution they're offering*.

Not only that, but the product itself describes the ideal client for whom they created the solution! For Difference Press, that's authors who want to make a difference with their books. For Jill Angie, that's curvy runners who didn't believe they could run at all, let alone finish an endurance race. For me, that's moms who are determined to have a successful business and still be the mothers and whole persons they want to be.

All too often, when we're developing products, we get completely caught up in how *we want to be seen* or what *we want to sell*, instead of focusing on what our clients actually want and need. The most classic example of this is when people offer something called a "coaching package" without explaining what problem the coaching package will solve. I totally did that during my first six months! But, as Dr. Lauria always reminds me, people don't buy coaching packages. *People buy solutions to their problems*. So, if you coach someone, don't sell "coaching." *Sell a way to get the client the result they want*.

As we discussed in the previous chapter, you may not know exactly who your ideal client is yet. That's okay! Just go sell something. Anything! Selling always provides valuable feedback. If your product doesn't sell, that means it's not solving someone's problem. If it does sell, it does solve a problem. Great! Now go make it better.

Bettering a product is about fine-tuning something that's already selling, in order to tailor it more to your clients' needs. For example, Erica recently repackaged her services to make it easier for her clients to buy more hours from her personal accounting business. She had a product she was selling, she just wanted to sell it more effectively and efficiently, which she

did by tweaking her offering. I'm still adjusting the ideal location, duration, and size of the small group retreats that I offer as part of my year-long mentorship program. I know it's less than six moms and either two or three days, but I'm still experimenting to see what *serves* my clients the best by seeing what *sells* the best.

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want to create a product that helps *solve a problem*.
- I want to create a product that *does something else*.

## Chapter 5: Your Sales and Marketing

It's easy to hate selling. It's one of the most common reasons people don't want to start their own businesses at all. Who wants to sell? I know I didn't. As Difference Press cover designer John Matthews recently reminded me, I once said that I wouldn't coach anymore if I had to actually sell things! It didn't matter that I already had clients. Nope. I was just going to wind down the coaching. Write some more books. Maybe switch to fiction. Definitely *no* selling.

I thought selling meant that I had to talk about myself or brag about my accomplishments. That all sounded very uncouth to me. I just wanted to write my blog posts and do my coaching thing until people heard about me from their friends and decided they *had* to hire me.

The truth is, sales (and marketing) get a bad rap. They're not nearly as awful as I thought at first. They're not what I thought they were at all.

This summer, I was at a Difference Press event with Dr. Lauria and one of her mentors, business guru Kevin Nations. I honestly don't really know why I went, because I still didn't think I wanted to sell things and, even if I did, I wasn't sure I could. While I was there, Kevin stood up and gave a speech that went something like this:

*You're all here today because you have something to offer the world – some gift, some service, some product that helps people in some real and tangible way. Now I want you to imagine yourself five or ten years from now. You're sitting at your desk doing your thing and you get a call telling you that you've won an award and asking you to be at a local auditorium at 7 p.m. that Saturday. That's all they tell you. Flattered, you accept. You get a new dress and do your hair and you're standing backstage, a little nervous, and you peek through the curtain. There are thousands of people in the audience. And then the introduction starts.*

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you so much for being here. We are here tonight so that [your name] – who has an effective solution to [their problem] – can explain to you why you've never heard of her."*

*And then the speaker gestures to you and asks you to take the microphone and tell all those people why you chose to hide and play it small rather than help them.*

Tears started streaming down my face. Up to that point, growing my business had been all about *me*. If I had to guess, up until now, your business has probably been all about *you*.

At the beginning of this crazy journey of starting a business that is right for us and our families, *we* are the hero of our own stories. We are focused on *our* goals, *our* dreams, *our* obstacles, and *our* triumphs. And rightly so! The hard work of change, of becoming who we truly are and discovering what we're being called to do in the world, *is* a hero's journey. But, at some beautiful point, we are blessed with the realization that *it's not about us anymore*.

All too often, we think about selling and marketing as a means to make more sales or more money. We feel like selling ourselves is taking something from someone else for *our* benefit. That feels selfish, wrong, sometimes even disgusting! But building a successful business – the kind I want to have and I think you want to have, too – *isn't about us at all*.

### **It's about our people.**

It's about being a force of love in the world. It's about being light where it seems like there is none. It's about holding space for people to be more, do more, or experience more than they ever thought possible.

It doesn't matter if you're selling a widget or doing sacred healing, *if you do it with love you can be part of the restoration of the world*.

Seen this way, *selling is actually part of your sacred calling*. It's a holy offering. That may seem cheesy to say. It may seem self-aggrandizing and like a super great rationale for doing whatever I want to do. But I have to tell you, I didn't want to coach moms on how to grow successful businesses that are right for them and their families. I wanted to write about God. About beauty. About heartache and rebirth at the broken edges of things.

*But then I realized I want to help my people even more.*

### **That is why I market my services. That is why I sell things.**

In order to help others, we have to meet them where they are. We have to speak to them with love in words and language *they* will understand.

As I've heard Brooke Castillo and Gabrielle Bernstein say, "Marketing is simply letting people know you can help them." Selling is about letting them know that you *will*.

So what does this look like, practically speaking? Right now, I'm 100 percent focused on selling my year-long mentorship program, where we'll work the steps in this book to create and implement a year-long plan to grow a successful business that's right for you and your family. In order to start selling it, I didn't create a webpage or revise my website (even though I wanted to!). Instead,

- I went through my personal and professional Facebook pages and messaged anyone who had repeatedly liked content related to my coaching offers, and asked them if they were interested in getting on the phone *to see if I could serve them*;

- I went through old emails and sent a *brief* email to anyone who had reached out but had not purchased something from me in the last year, to see if they were still interested *in solving their problem*; and
- I ran a series of Facebook ads for about \$5 to \$10 each inviting people to message me or set up a *free consultation* call, and I watched closely to see what messages and problems they were responding to, based on the different ads I'd put up.

Each one of those actions was intended to create opportunities for me to communicate directly with a potential client in order to see if what I was offering could help solve *their* problem.

That's why I want to get on the phone with every person who thinks they might be interested in coaching with me *before I make them an offer*. That's why I offer every person who purchases or downloads this book a free phone consultation (available at [www.callwithcaroline.com](http://www.callwithcaroline.com)). I want to understand *their* problem, *your* problem, and honestly assess whether what I'm offering will help provide a solution, and I want to do that before we even start talking about a sale.

The specific strategies you implement for you or your business might not look the same as mine. You're going to have to dig deep and sort through what selling looks like for you. Whatever it is, *it must include an opportunity for you to see if your solution is a good fit for a potential client's problem*. Otherwise, you'll backslide directly into the type of "busy work" we talked about at the beginning of this book.

So, if you're

- Doing research
- Revising website copy
- Fine-tuning your message
- Rebranding
- "Thinking" about your programs
- Getting coffee with people who you know aren't going to buy from you to talk about your business
- Blogging excessively
- Building programs you haven't sold yet
- Accepting business that falls in your lap without assessing whether it serves your objectives or motivations
- Searching for partnership opportunities before you've created an offering



Then watch out! Because when you're doing anything on this list – or anything that is energetically like the things on this list – *you're not actually selling*. Which means you're not creating opportunities to solve your potential client's problems. Which means you're not *servicing*.

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want to sell and market in order to *serve my people*.
- I want to hide my gifts in busywork and *serve my fear*.

## Chapter 6: Your Plan

So far, you've identified your primary motivation for having a business, learned the importance of developing your ideal client profile and a product that solves *their* problem, and – hopefully! – shifted your perspective about sales and marketing. Now it's time to build out a plan that's completely aligned with the type of business you want to grow and the reason you want to grow it.

The plan we're about to create isn't a traditional business plan, for a couple of reasons. First, that's not what my clients want. Most of them have the education or expertise to figure out how to do that on their own, or their service-oriented businesses simply don't need that type of extensive long-term planning at this early stage. Second, and most importantly, my clients are *moms*. As moms, our lives change drastically from year to year because our kids are changing drastically from year to year. We don't know what we'll want or need from our business in three or five years. What we do want and need to know is what our business is doing *right now*, this year.

So, that's what we're going to do: build out a concrete, actionable plan for the next twelve months in order to help you get super clear about what you need to be doing *today* to get where you want to go.

In order to do that, we're going to start by picking *one* year-end objective that is in complete alignment with your primary motivation. If you haven't selected your primary motivation yet, no worries. Go back and do that now before continuing on. In order to create a plan that is in complete integrity with what you truly want and why you truly want it, you need to make sure you're feeling clear, connected to, and energized by your primary motivation. Once you've got it, start reflecting upon this question: **What *one* thing needs to happen by the end of this year to achieve my primary motivation?**

It doesn't have to be the *only* thing you accomplish, but it does need to be the most important. And it does need to be in *complete alignment* with your primary motivation.

What does that look like? Here's an example. If your primary motivation is money, pick a specific amount you want to be earning, such as \$100,000 per year or \$25,000 per month. If your primary motivation is fame, pick something that will increase your visibility, like appearing on a local talk show or having your own successful podcast series, and so on. The point of your primary objective is to create a crystal-clear picture of what you want to achieve this year and that is in complete alignment with why you have a business in the first place.

Now, if you're freaking out about just picking one motivation for the whole year and are already wondering if you can secretly sneak three or four additional objectives into your plan without me finding out, the answer is, of course you can. *But you probably won't achieve any of your objectives if you do.*

Just like we talked about when it came to our motivations, if we try to do everything we'll end up doing nothing. But, if we're willing to narrow it to one primary objective that's in complete alignment with our one true motivation, we'll end up doing so much more.

Remember, you're not swearing a blood oath here. You're simply picking a primary objective that aligns with your primary motivation so that you can build out a meaningful plan. You can always revise it.

So, go ahead. Pick one.

Once you've got it, you're ready to start building out your year-long plan. Or, as my clients like to call it, your Matter Map. Over the next few pages, I'm going to walk you through exactly how I do this with my clients at my live events. If you want the full benefit of the Matter Map, take the time to actually do this as you read along.

Start by going to [www.determinedmomsguide.com/mattermap](http://www.determinedmomsguide.com/mattermap) to download your free template. Then grab a box of colored pencils. It's not only more fun to use color, it's also helpful for unleashing your creativity – an important but often overlooked part of any successful business planning. I love colored pencils (and coloring) so much that I include them as client gifts and put them on the covers of all my books!

Now, on the left side of the page, write down where you are now. I'll use Karen as an example. She wrote, "over-booked, exhausted, ready to quit."

On the right side, write down your primary objective – where you want to be one year from now that is in total alignment with your primary motivation. For Karen it was "have a sustainable, fun, and lucrative business that feels awesome to me and is right for my family."

If you are not using the template I linked to above, connect the right side of the page with the left side with a line and divide the space in between now and a year from now with three hash marks, to create a timeline. Label the hash marks Q1, Q2, and Q3 to mark the year that starts now into three quarters. We're going to work your plan backwards, starting with quarter three.

Examine your primary objective and ask yourself, "If I want to achieve this goal by the end of the year, what actually needs to be done by the end of the third quarter to make that happen? For Karen, it was "working less than 40 hours a week without losing revenue."

Repeat this analysis for every quarter, each time asking yourself, "If I want to achieve the objective for this quarter, what actually needs to be done by the end of the previous quarter?" For Karen's Q2, she wrote "hire a better assistant, set better boundaries for myself,

have a better invoicing system in place, and, most importantly, do fewer parties.” Her Q1 was “figure out who my ideal client is, how much money I really want to be making, and identify the most effective, authentic way to make it.”

By the time you finish with this step of creating your Matter Map, you will automatically have quarterly goals that are completely in alignment with your primary objective and primary motivation for the year! Not only that, but by working backwards, you avoid the nonsense of what your very busy, very neurotic, and very egoic mind has to tell you about what you “should” or “have to” do in order to have a successful business. Instead, you work within a framework of what *actually needs to get done to serve your actual objectives*.

This is perhaps my favorite thing about the Matter Map (not to mention one of the most important things I’ve learned about growing my business). There is absolutely no room in the map for asking:

- What would my mom say I should do?
- What does my friend think I should do?
- What are my other entrepreneur friends doing?
- What might be the easiest thing to do?
- What do I “have to” do?
- What is my favorite blogger online doing?

The moment you start asking “Should I?” or “Do I have to?” questions is the moment you start self-sabotaging and getting in your own way, because you’re doing something that you *think* needs to be done without tying it to *your* objectives, which are what’s going to get you where *you* want to go. Stick with what actually needs to be done to satisfy your primary motivation!

As you’re formulating your objectives, try and make them as SMART as possible. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound. This isn’t a concept I came up with myself – it’s a tried and true method used by companies, government agencies, organizations, and individuals worldwide because it works.

If you want more clients, get SMART: “I want ten new clients a month by the end of the second quarter, at the rate of \$1500 per client.”

If you want more revenue, get SMART: “I want \$15,000 a month by the end of the second quarter stemming from ten new clients per month at a rate of \$1500 per client.”

If you want more time with your kids, get SMART: “I want at least three tuck-ins a week.”

You get the idea! The SMARTer you can be, the more likely you'll be to succeed in the ways *you* want to.

With that in mind, turn to the second page of the template or get out another sheet of paper. Now, pick a quarter. I like starting with Q1 but you can start wherever you feel most comfortable and confident. We're going to repeat the process, only this time for each month, then (if you want to) each week.

Looking at your quarterly objective, ask yourself, "What actually needs to be done at the end of each of those three months to make this happen?" Assign each month a SMART objective. Repeat for the remaining three quarters.

Then repeat the process at a weekly level. Ask yourself, "What actually needs to get done in each of the next four weeks to reach my monthly objective?"

If you really want to drill down, repeat the process at a daily level. Ask yourself, "What actually needs to get done on each of the next seven days to reach my weekly objective?" Organize these SMART weekly objectives into daily tasks.

That's it! You're done. You've just identified quarterly, monthly, and even weekly goals for the rest of the year, all of which are in complete service to your primary motivation and primary objective.

But before you pop open a bottle of champagne and celebrate, there's one last thing you need to do: *Fess up to all the things you're thinking about doing that aren't on your map.*

You know what I'm talking about. That list of things that you think won't affect your business because you can *totally* handle it all.

**This is what I call overachiever's self-sabotage.**

Time and again, overachievers like us *tend to forget that we're human* and, without even realizing it, we completely undermine our own success. I, for one, am pretty much a ninja when it comes to getting in my own way: stealthy, lightning-quick, and potentially lethal. Just ask my mentors! But my clients are pretty amazing at it, too. Here's a list of some of the things they "overlooked" or "forgot" or "didn't think really counted" when it came to building their businesses:

- Having a baby
- Selling my house and moving
- Writing a book
- Starting a blog
- Making a podcast series
- Putting on a conference
- Starting graduate school

- Training for a marathon
- Joining one (or two) new boards

I hope you can see why leaving these kinds of commitments off a very detailed plan – created with the purpose of achieving your primary objective and honing your motivation for the coming year – might be a slight problem.

Do yourself a favor: Don't sabotage yourself! Stick to what actually needs to be done in order to achieve what you truly want and why you truly want it, and make sure to put it into the context of the other things going on in your life. If you have a major event that doesn't mesh with the plan, then recalibrate your plan. That's the beauty of the Matter Map tool. It makes you the author and the *editor* of your own success.

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want a SMART, *honest*, and complete Matter Map.
- I want to *self-sabotage*.

## Chapter 7: Your Obstacles

On the last day of my live events, I ask moms what they think is going to be most likely to derail them from putting their plans into place. They come up with all sorts of real obstacles, like time, money, family commitments, and sick family members. That's when I drop this bomb: Regardless of what you might think, **the single biggest obstacle to implementing your plan and creating a year that truly matters to you is *your own thoughts*.**

All too often, high-achieving women align themselves entirely with what they *think*. This tendency, rooted in the Cartesian notion "I think therefore I am," isn't only erroneous, it's also detrimental to success – however we define it. When we align our identity or, even worse, our worth with our thoughts about ourselves, we assess our outcomes by what is transpiring inside of our own minds instead of what's happening in the present moment. Not only that, but we tend to create the very things we fear and worry about!

Whether we realize it or not, our thoughts have incredible power to determine our outcomes. If you think you're going to fail, then, in all likelihood, you will. Why? If you choose to view the world through the lens "I'm going to fail," you'll effectively put on blinders to any evidence that contradicts that position. Everywhere you look, all you'll see is evidence of how you've failed, even if there's tremendous evidence to the contrary.

Here's an example. If I choose to assess my last month through the lens "I'm failing," all I see are the reasons that's true, such as: I'm writing a book I don't think I'm qualified to write; I rented a new office I don't yet have the revenue to pay for; I haven't yet paid back our family savings for all my trainings, mentorships, and business expenses. I could go on and on. And when I do, I start believing I'm failing. Then what happens? I start *acting* as if I'm failing. I shy away from selling. I stop talking about my services. And, if I'm not careful, I create the very thing I was afraid of in the first place.

But I have a choice! I can just as easily assess my last month through the lens "I'm succeeding" and look for all the reasons *that* is true: I have an amazing client base that is constantly growing; my year-long program is made up of an awesome group of highly-motivated moms who are determined to build lives that truly matter to them; and in less than a year I've written two books I love that serve my clients well. Again, I could go on and on. And when I do, I believe that I'm actually succeeding! Then I start *acting* as if I'm succeeding. I sell more. I talk about my services more. And I serve more people. Pretty soon, I've created the very thing I hoped for in the first place.

Sound crazy? Maybe. It did to me when I first thought about it. But it's not. It's called "thought work," which is a simple way of cultivating deep awareness of our own thoughts and taking concrete steps towards shifting, or reframing, them to be in complete alignment with what we *want* instead of what we *fear*.

Although there are many approaches to thought work, my favorites are Brooke Castillo's method as explained in her book *Self Coaching 101* and Byron Katie's in her book *Loving What Is*. In both methods, the first step is to take a step back and realize that you are not your thoughts.

Spend a moment doing this now. Take a deep breath and notice your own thinking. Notice that you are the one noticing. *Notice that you are not your thoughts.*

This is called being in the place of the "watcher" or "observer" or, if you're my tennis coach, the "umpire." It's the place from which we can notice our thoughts without judgment and, eventually, with compassion.

From this place of centered calm, we can begin to realize that all of the obstacles we face in the coming year – whether in our personal or professional lives – stem from our thoughts. We can start to notice that, particularly for overachievers like ourselves, nothing seems to ever satisfy *our minds* or, to put it another way, *our egoic selves*.

Our egoic selves (also called our *false selves* or *social selves*) are the parts of us that have been created over the course of our lifetimes in order to protect, shield, and prevent us from experiencing physical or social harm. It's the part of us that tells us to be quiet so we don't get noticed or to speak up so we don't get overlooked. What and how our social self tells us has everything to do with our personal experiences, especially in our families of origin, and can be deeply shaped by trauma. As such, if in the process of becoming more aware of your thoughts you begin to reconnect with or remember past experiences that feel painful or frightening to you, please consider seeking the help of a licensed, trained therapist. I did, and I encourage my clients to do so as they feel it is necessary. We all need different types of support as we begin to see with this entirely new perspective.

If you feel safe, secure, and ready to continue with thought work, begin watching how your mind is shaping your experience. Notice the stories you tell yourself about what is happening in your personal and professional life. When something goes badly or something goes well, what thought are you having? *These are the operational stories that indirectly guide your experiences every day.* In order to stay on track this year, you need to face your big stories head-on.

When it comes to building a successful business that's right for us and our families, there are generally two main "stories" or negative thought patterns that are most likely to



separate us from our primary motivations and objectives and derail us from our plans: fear of failure and fear of success.

Let's address them both.

## 1. Fear of Failure

For overachievers, our fear of failure is intricately connected to our perfectionism. We are used to doing things better, faster, and with more precision than anyone else. And we like it that way.

The fact that our standards are higher than everyone else's has served us incredibly well. For most of us, that's precisely how we've achieved our greatest accomplishments to date.

But when it comes to building a successful business that's right for you and your family, fear of failure and perfectionism doesn't serve you. In fact, it holds you back. I can't tell you how many times I've been at a luncheon or a cocktail party or in the carpool line talking to a mom who has a great idea for a business but hasn't done anything about it, or who has started a business but hasn't done anything to improve or scale it – all because they're afraid to fail, do it wrong, or look foolish.

I totally get it. Failure is terrifying. But if you're really going to commit to creating a year that truly matters to you, you're going to have to rethink your definition of failure. Because, in reality – outside of your own mind – *there is no such thing as failure. There is only God's gentle redirection.*

Knowing that and believing it are two totally different things. As perfectionistic, overachieving women, we know that failure *may* happen, but we'd rather do everything right the first time. Again, I get it. More than you might think. I've failed more times than I care to count!

But here's the hard truth: **If you want a successful business that's right for you and your family, failure isn't only an option, it's inevitable.** You're going to try things before you feel ready to. You're going to sell things before they feel ready. And yes, sometimes you're going to make offers you think are amazing and perfect. *In each case, a lot of them will bomb.*

And that's amazing! Because when we're ready to release our love of being perfect and instead choose to focus on our love for the people we're called to serve, *we're going to get things wrong on our way to getting them right.*

**In business, perfectionism is the same as inaction.** If you're not okay with messing up a few times in order to make a difference for your people or in your industry, then you're basically saying you'd rather not try at all. Because if you're thinking about waiting around until

you get it absolutely perfect, you're never going to do anything or help anyone. As the old adage says, "Don't let *perfect* be the enemy of *done*."

If you truly want a successful business that's right for you and your family, then it's time to play the fool for your people. It's time to move before you're ready. It's time to do things *imperfectly*.

I know what you're thinking: "Imperfectly?! What are you? A crazy lady?!" But there is tremendous power in stepping out in faith before we think we're ready. Before everything is just right.

This was a *huge* lesson for me in my first year of business. The week before my first book was published, I tried to basically rewrite it, because it "wasn't good enough." Dr. Lauria gave me a choice: either hide or serve my people. I published it as it was. I even found out later that it had four or five typos. Typos, people! But I did it. It's out there. You can go buy it right now. *Because I didn't keep it from you in order to "perfect" it.* And it was that very imperfect book that led to my biggest income month, as well as to the program that is the foundation for this book.

As Marissa Mayer, the chief executive officer of Yahoo, said: "I always did something I was a little not ready to do. I think that's how you grow. When there's that moment of 'Wow, I'm not really sure I can do this,' and you push through those moments, that's when you have a breakthrough."

Or, as my favorite quote by G.K. Chesterton goes: "**Anything worth doing is worth doing badly.**"

So, if you need to, forgive yourself in advance for whatever happens. Then focus entirely on your primary motivation and your primary objective and love the sh\*t out of your people, even if it scares the sh\*t out of you. If you can do that, then *you'll succeed every time.*

## 2. Fear of Success

On the other side of the fear of failure is fear of success. As Marianne Williamson famously wrote, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?'"

I believe this is particularly true when you're a mother trying to grow a business that's not only right for you, but right for your family as well. Fear of succeeding was one of the major hurdles I had to overcome. After all, success has consequences! I was constantly asking myself questions like: *What if the business gets too big and I'm working as much as I did in my former career? What if I get asked to speak all over the country and I'm travelling all the time? What if I*

*have to start hiring people and managing staff and doing payroll and talking to lawyers, none of which I really want to do? What if I turn back into a total whack-job stress-ball?*

Whether we realize it or not, our own fear of stepping up and doing something amazing in the world can be seriously paralyzing. Not only that, *it can feel downright selfish*. After years of putting everyone else first, committing to something we truly want is not only unfamiliar, but often counter-cultural. We live in a time where people tell us over and over and over again what it means to be a “good” mother, but almost none of those cultural definitions include pursuing your own dreams and loving yourself well.

In order to counteract the tide telling us to be afraid of our own power, we need to take a step back, take a deep breath in, and remember that this crazy journey we’re on isn’t just a whim. *For most of us, it’s a calling.*

When we step out of our comfort zones in order to birth a dream or expose our true selves or serve others in pain, when we lean into the discomfort of our stories and dare to use it to heal and help others, *that is a calling.*

Let’s be honest – we wouldn’t do it otherwise! I wouldn’t do it otherwise. I would stay home and play tennis and write bad poetry no one would ever read, and take really long, warm naps.

So, when you’re terrified and overwhelmed and think you can’t do it, *take heart, beloved*. Get really quiet and watch the autumn leaves outside your window fall gently to the ground. Go for a walk in the woods and listen to squirrels scamper in the brush. Go do something, anything, that will help you forget for just one second how hard everything can be if we let it, how undeserving we feel if we allow it.

Welcome anything that quiets the voices in your head that tell you that you aren’t worthy of this journey. Make room for the truth that you can.

Those nasty voices in your head – the never-ending litany of “I can’t” or “I shouldn’t” or “Not yet” or “I’m not qualified” – *they aren’t real*. The voice telling you that what you really need is a new website, not a sellable product; that you should tinker with your logo colors instead of getting a prospective client on the phone; that you should do 18 billion things this week instead of the one thing on your Matter Map –*they aren’t the truth*.

The truth is that your primary motivation reveals more about your gifting than your greed. Your primary objective reveals more about your calling to change this crazy world of ours than it does about your conforming to it. Your plan isn’t only about building a business, *it’s about finding your way back home to your truest self on your way to somewhere else*.

All those voices in your head telling you anything else? They’re just lies keeping you small.

The only true voice is the one telling you that you are powerful beyond measure. **The only true voice is the one telling you that you are loved.** No matter what you achieve, no matter what you do or fail to do, no matter what decisions you make or what business you build, no matter how amazing or foolish you look or seem, you are loved, always and forever. *Just because you breathe.*

So have faith, beloved. You are part of a transformation that is larger than yourself. Larger than anything you could ever have imagined. Regardless of what you do, regardless of what you chose, *everything is already okay.*

As Julian of Norwich said, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want to build a life in response to *my calling.*
- I want to build a life in response to *my thoughts.*

## Chapter 8: Your Balance

Now let's talk work-life balance. Or work-life integration. It doesn't matter much what we call it. The question is the same: *how do we show up as the mothers, wives, partners, and human beings we want to be while growing successful businesses that are right for us?*

Here's the big reveal: *I don't know.* And here's some truth that I hope will help you breathe easier: *Neither does anyone else.*

Don't get me wrong. I completely understand the desire to have a clear-cut, easy-to-follow guide on how to strike the perfect balance. If I thought there was a printable checklist or a ten-step program out there that could give me the exact right magical formula for spending just enough time at home so that I won't get bored/feel trapped/get resentful and enjoy my kids/have fun/be present/etc. *and* spend the right amount of time on work so that I won't get overwhelmed by stuff I'm ignoring at home/get resentful/miss my kids/forget to have fun/miss stuff I'll regret/etc., then I would totally buy it. And if I thought I could create one that actually worked, I would totally sell it! *But I don't believe there is one.*

This becomes painfully obvious when we try to make up a checklist in order to try and get everything right. Here, I'll show you.

### My Attempt at a Work-Life Balance Checklist

When it comes to kids:

- Be home for at least three dinners and bedtimes a week
- Make sure to do drop off at least twice
- Don't plan travel during the Halloween party or Book Fair
- Sign-up to be a lunch helper once a month

When it comes to marriage:

- Have a date night at least twice a month
- Aim for sex at least once a week
- Go out of town alone without the kids once a year

When it comes to business:

- Don't let yourself down
- Don't let anyone else down
- Make money

When it comes to self-care:

- Sleep at least six hours every night
- Exercise at least three times a week for 30 minutes
- Eat only purple vegetables on the third Tuesday of every month

Do you see how absurd this is? Do you see how quickly it gives us a false sense of security and safety?

**The second we pick up a checklist is the second we check out on what is truly right for us and our families.**

The much harder, much more effective, and much more meaningful choice is to build lives that truly matter to *us*. Because when we're defining and living into authentic success for ourselves and our families, we *are* being the best wives and mothers we can be.

The truth about finding the right balance is that there is no such thing as the right balance. The best we can do is build a life that truly matters to us and to our families.

This is the reason I'm crazy about the Matter Map. Your map was created by *you*, in alignment with what *you* said you wanted, for the reasons *you* chose. By creating your own Map, you outlined in painstaking detail what success would look like to *you* this year. And if it's not working or feels out of alignment, *you* get to change it. If you start to realize that you're not spending enough time with your kids or not being present enough with your spouse or not spending enough time taking care of yourself, *then you get to be honest with yourself and start again.*

There is no system – no matter how amazing it may seem – that can give you a perfect plan that is right for you on the first shot. The best it can do is give you a framework that inspires you to take meaningful action and gives you tools to recalibrate along the way. And that's precisely what the Matter Map does.

So please, *please*, stop comparing your plan to everyone else's plan. Don't look on the Internet for articles that will tell you how many nights a week you need to be home or how often you should be having sex with your partner. Trust yourself!

Take the place of the watcher and notice what thought storms you're creating. Then get centered and ask yourself, "What's right for me and my family?" If you're answering that question honestly, you already have all the balance you need.

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want *balance that's right for me and my family.*
- I want to exhaust myself trying to achieve *balance that's right for someone else.*

# Chapter 9: Your Encouragement

Right about now you're probably wondering whether growing a business that's right for you and your family is even worth it. You may doubt that you know who your people are. You wonder if you'll ever find your way. The whole thing may seem scarier, bigger, and more overwhelming than you expected when you first had the idea to work for yourself. It might seem like it's too much work. It may even feel like you're sure to fail.

Let me take a few moments to lighten the mood and speak some hopefully humorous, encouraging, and grace-filled truth into that rapidly spinning, overheating, left-brain of yours that's probably kicking and screaming with everything it's got.

I call this my totally honest, completely unnecessary, but pretty awesome pep talk, and I have to give it *a lot*. Especially to myself. Here goes:

## 1. You're Not Alone

Right now, you might think that every single person who has ever grown a business in the history of the world knew more, has done more, and is most certainly more qualified, certified, competent, and capable than you will ever be.

I guarantee you are wrong.

Not only are you wrong, you are not the only one who feels inadequate, terrified, overwhelmed, excited, hopeful, nervous, and energized by thinking about their business. You are *not* alone.

## 2. You're Not Crazy

There may be some people in your life who look at you like you are *crazy* when you tell them you want to grow a business on your own. They could be your mom, your sister, your uncle, your neighbor, or even your old mentor, some or all of whom might nod supportively but then keep implying in a not-so-casual way that you should just go back to your old career.

Ignore them. You are not crazy.

## 3. No One Else Has It All Figured Out

There is not a single human being I have ever met who has it all figured out. Not that mom in the carpool line who always has designer clothes and freshly blow-dried hair. Not that

woman on *The Today Show* with her brand-new multi-million-dollar product launch. Not you. Not me.

That's the major problem being a human: You do not get to have it all figured out. Ever. Neither does anybody else (see #1 – You're Not Alone.)

#### **4. You Do Not Have to Get It All Together Before You Start**

Just because we don't have it all figured out, doesn't mean we have to run off and get our sh\*t together before we build a business that matters to us and our families. If I waited until I had it all together, you would never have read this book, because it wouldn't exist. I would not have a business. I would not be helping moms like you build lives that matter. I would be hiding in a hole waiting for the day that never cometh when I can figure out how to give the diabetic cat his insulin shots on time, feed the kids something other than macaroni and cheese for the third day in a row, clean out the smashed goldfish crackers from my car seat, etc., etc., etc. None of that is because I am too busy, too rushed, too stressed, or too overwhelmed. It's just because I'm a human who occasionally sleeps.

I want to be very clear about this. Lest you surmise otherwise, I am *not* healed. Goodness, no. I'm broken and messy and I still yell at my kids too much and eat to numb too often. Do I think that's okay? I don't know. I just know it's true. And that it hasn't kept me from answering my call to serve and help people build businesses that matter. And it doesn't have to keep you from answering your call either.

Just start. Now.

#### **5. There Is No "Better" Time**

Yes, there will be a day when your kids will all be in full day school. Yes, there will be a day when they can drive themselves. Yes, they'll eventually go off to college. All of those might be "better" times to start a business, *if you don't really want one*. But you do. I know that because you're still reading. And even though this is a short book, you wouldn't be here with me if you didn't really want this. So, other than the tragic loss of an immediate family member, the birth of a new child, or some equally deeply transformative and traumatic life event, this is my advice: Just. Start. Now.

If you truly want a business that's right for you and your family, the only thing you'll regret a year from now is doing *nothing*.

#### **6. Wanting More Does Not Make You Ungrateful for What You Already Have**



There was a time when I felt like wanting a business was a betrayal of my family. This may not be you, and it's sort of messed up and embarrassing, so bear with me. I didn't need the money. I could help the world in all sorts of ways that didn't require trips out of town, extra expenses, or childcare. And I was fairly sure my business would never really take off. I found myself constantly wondering if it might be better to be grateful for what I already had instead of trying to make something else happen.

Here's what I've decided: We can be deeply, deeply grateful for what we have while also wanting *more*. Wanting to be more of ourselves. Wanting to offer more to the world. More service. More laughter. More magic. More excitement. More fun. More joy.

We can experience more of that right now by being fully present right where we are. Absolutely. Yes, practicing gratitude is amazing (and good business). But heeding a true calling to start a business doesn't mean you're ungrateful for what your life looks like now. It generally means you're so grateful you want to share what you've learned or unlearned or picked up along the way with others who can benefit from your story and your hope.

Wanting to share yourself, your message, your product with the world isn't being ungrateful. That's *love*.

## **7. You Will Fail – That's Awesome**

We already talked about this, but it's worth saying again. Failure isn't just an option. Failure is *inevitable*. Yes, you will look stupid! You will say the wrong thing! You will make mistakes! That's what happens when you start a business that's headed toward success. You learn and learn and learn and learn. You learn so much it hurts. But, eventually, failure doesn't feel like failure so much anymore. It begins to feel a whole lot more like God's gentle redirection.

## **8. You *Do* Have Something Worth Offering the World**

Do you hear that voice inside your head telling you that you don't have anything worth offering the world? Mine comes at me from the left side, sort of 45 degrees off my left eyebrow. It's shrill and cruel and constantly reminding me of how totally unqualified I am to write this book and talk to you.

Do you wish I had listened to it? Do you wish I had waited another year or five to get even more case studies and do more research and gather more evidence that this method works? Or are you glad I was willing to play the fool for you and put this out there now?

We can wait forever until we have a perfect offering. We can wait slightly less than that to create a closer to perfect one. But the only way we'll know if the offer is worth anything at all

is to make it and see what happens. If you've hung in this long, you *do* have something to offer the world. We both know it.

## **9. You Absolutely, Positively Do *Not* Have to Do This Alone**

Don't let anyone fool you – especially not me. This building-a-life-that-matters thing is *hard*. It takes days of waking up and swearing you can't keep going and then going anyway. It takes nights of believing you're failing and then waking up and trying again anyway. It takes teary afternoons over your laptop muttering, "I was so much happier when I was miserable," because at least then you didn't know any better. You didn't know any different.

Sometimes I ask myself why I keep going. It's not like we set up a business and work starts pouring in right away and keeps pouring in day after day. And if it does, we have other problems – scaling, managing staff, not losing ourselves in the process of running a thriving business. Creating and running a successful business is so much harder than I thought it would be. Sometimes I think I should just go back to the way things were.

But I can't. And if you're being called to this magical journey called transformation, neither can you.

That's why I'm grateful every day that I'm not doing it alone. I've got coaches and spiritual mentors and prayer partners and a masseuse and all sorts of crazy support in place to help hold me up as I walk this path and do the hard work of showing up less as who my ego thinks I should be and more as who I really am. The myth of self-sufficiency is a dangerous one, beloved. For us and for the people we love and serve. It cuts us off from one another. It cuts us off from God. Eventually, it even cuts us off from ourselves.

When I started this journey, I thought I was smart enough, well-educated enough, and determined enough to figure it all out by myself. You know what? I was right. I would have figured it out on my own – eventually. But when I was willing to ask for, listen to, and receive the blessing of help, when I was ready and willing to trust others and receive their support, that's when things really got beautiful, both personally and professionally.

So if you find yourself thinking, "I can do this alone," please, *please* know that you're right. You totally could. But I hope you won't. I hope that, instead, you choose to let someone help you. Right now. Today. It doesn't matter who. It doesn't matter how. Just let someone, anyone you trust, come alongside you and help you with your heavy load.

As Husband always has to remind me, the fact that you *can* do it by yourself doesn't mean you *have to*.

## **10. It Doesn't Matter What You Do Next, as Long as You Intentionally Choose It**

I meant it when I said I believe you're loved deeply, completely, and unconditionally, no matter what, regardless of what you choose to do next. If you aren't ready or don't feel willing or are too scared to start a business after reading this book, *that's okay*. Own that. Look yourself in the mirror and admit whatever it is that's holding you back from taking action. Don't fight it. Sit with it. Welcome it. Then intentionally make whatever choice is right for you and your family.

But don't cave to fear. Don't just do what feels safe or makes the most "sense." Trust yourself. Listen to *you*. And then make the authentic choice that aligns most deeply with who you truly are, what you truly want, and why you truly want it.

As long as the choice is *yours* and comes from a deep place of love for yourself and others, it can't possibly be wrong.

*So, here's your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want to keep going toward a *life that truly matters to me*.
- I want to keep going toward a *life that looks like it matters to others*.

## Chapter 10: NEXT

Congratulations! If you're reading this, I hope you've chosen:

1. Your business over busyness
2. Your one primary motivation
3. To start selling in order to find your people
4. To create a product that solves your clients' problem
5. To keep selling and marketing with a servant's heart
6. To create A SMART, honest, and complete Matter Map
7. To build a life in response to your calling, not your thoughts
8. To find the balance that is right for you and your family, and
9. To build a life that truly matters to you.

This is no small feat! Digging in to what we truly want and why we truly want it and then taking action on those discoveries is hard, beautiful work. But once you've started digging deep into your dreams and you've begun to believe that something *more* is possible for you and your family, you'll never go back. And you'll never regret it, even if some days you *think* or *feel* like you do.

Last summer I was at a live event with my mentor. It was the first session of the second day and our mentor greeted us with a warm smile and a big "So how's everyone doing today?"

I burst into tears. "I was so much happier when I was miserable," I cried.

The whole room laughed and sighed and breathed deeply with me. Truthfully, that's what I felt right then. I knew it wasn't true. They knew it wasn't true. But that's what I *felt*.

Six years ago, when I was home on maternity leave, confused and lost, I never could have imagined that this is where I would be now, here writing my second book, terrified but *alive* beyond my wildest imaginings. In case you think this has been a piece of cake for me, it's worth telling you a little bit more about how I got here.

I was sure I'd return to my job as a lawyer after I had my first child. Positive. When my little one was only four months old, I raced around like a crazy person so I could go back to work after my maternity leave and lead a trial team. Then the case settled. Eventually, I did go back for a few months, but I was miserable. So I went back on maternity leave for a second time, got pregnant somewhat unexpectedly, and stayed on maternity leave for another year. As

time wore on and it became more and more clear that I probably wasn't going back to the law firm, I started thinking about what was next for me.

First, I considered being a writer. After all, I had always wanted to write a book and I considered myself to be pretty good at writing. And it fit with my schedule. I could do it from home while the babies napped and sneak it in after their bedtime or while they played quietly on the floor. So I started writing a romance novel (a darn good one), but I realized that I didn't love the genre as much as I thought I would and writing the first 40,000 words was fun, but finishing it seemed a bit overwhelming. And if I did finish, then I'd have to try and get it published. *Next!*

Well, I *loved* romantic comedies. Loved them. I'd watched about 300 of them on Netflix. So I considered being a screenwriter, which meant I bought every book I could find about the cultural study of romantic comedies and pored over them at great length. If I was going to write a rom com, I was going to do it *right*. I certainly wasn't going to write anything trite or silly. My rom com would be powerful, feminist, uplifting, hysterical, and epically romantic, but in an edgy, original way. I signed up for a screenwriting class. I wrote my first screenplay. Then I was over it. *Next!*

That's when I realized my search for meaningful work *was* a romantic comedy! And my dream job was my suitor! If I was going to find my one true career love, I had to do the one thing every protagonist in every decent romantic comedy ever made did. I had to build my *montage scene*. Like Julia Roberts in *Runaway Bride*, I had to know what type of eggs I liked. I had to discover my favorite color. I had to uncover my passions and reconnect with my true self and then I would find what I *loved!*

So I sat down with a journal and a pen (this was years before I knew anything about life coaching by the way) and wrote out what my video montage would look like if I were the star of my own romantic comedy. I would start eating better. I would wake up early and meditate before the girls woke up every day. I would read my Bible for at least 30 minutes each night. I would naturally lose weight, because I would train for a marathon. I'd dye my hair. Get new clothes. And... and... and... I'd own my own puzzle business! And not just any puzzle business, but a boutique puzzle business nestled in the woods of Vermont that made brilliant, beautiful wooden puzzles with love, carefully crafted and packaged by gifted artisans who knew, understood, and loved puzzles as much as the buyer.

It all made perfect sense! Ever since I was a child, I'd *loved* puzzles. As I grew older, my mom and I had started collecting hand-carved wooden puzzles full of intricate pieces, every one of which I *cherish*. The way they feel, the way they smell, the way they rest in your hand and slide together. Yes! I was going to make and sell the best hand-carved, wooden puzzles in America.

*This. Was. It.*

I bought every book I could find on the history of wooden, hand-carved puzzle-making (there were three, in case you're wondering) and read each delicious word. I researched my competitors. I signed-up for an introductory jigsaw class at a local woodshop and went to it.

"What's wrong?" Husband asked gently when I came back home and went straight to the pantry for a bag of tortilla chips. "Wasn't it fun?"

I stuffed a chip in my mouth. "It was fun," I replied as I crunched. "But it was kind of hard. And did you know the saw makes lots of dust. I hadn't thought about that. Where could we put the saw?" Suddenly, the jigsaw I had picked out online and the slabs of wood and commercial glue I had thought of ordering didn't seem like such a good idea. *Next!*

Since my daughter and I have chronic kidney disease, why not go to medical school and become a nephrologist! Since *Bones* is my favorite TV show, I could learn forensic science from a textbook I paid \$100 for on Amazon and pitch a script so I could get a spot in the writing room! Since there are no play-cafes in the DC Metro area, I could raise some capital, rent a space, and start one!

*And on and on and on.*

I am not making this up. I literally spent years trying to find my passion and turn it into a lucrative career. It felt like a mildly depressing, fairly daunting, and somewhat disastrous adventure. I almost gave up altogether. More than once.

But here's the thing, beloved. What I didn't realize yet was that I was in the middle of a transformation that was larger than my own desire to grow a business. I was being called deeper and deeper into a journey of growth by a force bigger than myself. I call it God. You can call it whatever you like. But when I look back I can see her benevolent hand so clearly.

Take the puzzles, for example. As it turns out, I didn't actually want to make wooden puzzles. But I did want to build a small team of gifted "artisans" to create something of beauty and meet a need in a way that was better and more cost-effective than anybody else's way, and to use my love of putting disparate pieces together and my powerful ability to see the whole picture incredibly quickly to serve others. *All of which I now do through my coaching practice.*

Take the writing, for another example. As it turns out, I didn't want to write fiction or screenplays. But I did want to write, and I did want to use the power of story to touch people's lives and help open them up to the powerful message that the hard work of change is both possible and completely worth doing. *Which I now do through The Determined Mom's Guides.*

No experience on my journey was wasted. That's true for me and it's true for you. *Nothing is ever wasted.* But that doesn't mean we can't speed up the process. We can. **We can choose to participate.** We can, as Martha Beck says, "live in creative response to the present moment."

If we do that, if we choose to participate in the life we have and be present to what is right now by getting out into the world with whatever gifts we have to offer imperfectly *right now*, whatever divine source is calling us forward on this path will meet us there. **We just have to be willing to forsake the comfort of our own misery for the discomfort of our own triumphs.**

As one of my dear friends likes to say, “We’re all so busy trying to run back to Egypt.” In the Old Testament, Moses leads the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into the desert. Although God lovingly tends to their every need, life as free people was in many ways harder than forced servitude. They slept on the hard ground. They had very little to eat. They were exhausted and confused. And so they would scream at Moses, “Why did you bring us here? In Egypt we had food to eat and beds to sleep in. In Egypt we were safe.” Left to their own devices, the people thought they would rather be comfortable slaves than uncomfortable free people.

This is our human nature when left to our own thoughts and our own fears. What I wish for you, beloved, is that you choose to embrace *freedom* – whatever that looks like to you. **What I wish for you is that you choose to live at the end of your comfort zone, where true life really begins.**

I hope that you don’t let this book be one more that you buy and never read. I hope it doesn’t get stuck on your nightstand or lost in your e-reader. I hope something sparks you to read it from cover to cover and that, somehow, in some small or large way, you’re inspired, encouraged, determined to bring forth whatever you’re being called to offer the world. I hope you dare to love more deeply, live more freely, and serve more effectively than you ever thought possible.

And I hope that in doing so, you become even more of who you truly are. For yourself. For your family. For every person you’re meant to love and serve.

**I hope you’re audacious enough to truly matter to *you*.**

But, whatever you decide, whatever you do, know that you are loved. Always and forever. No matter what. You are loved.

*So, here’s your NEXT Step:*

Choose one:

- I want to do the hard, uncomfortable work of building a business and life that is successful on *my terms* and is right for *me* and *my* family.
- I want to *shrink into the comfort of staying the same*.

# Acknowledgments

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## About the Author



Caroline Greene is a recovering lawyer, chronic overachiever, and the best-selling author of *MATTER: How to Find Meaningful Work That's Right for You and Your Family*. As a life and business coach, Caroline helps highly-motivated, determined moms start businesses and build lives that truly matter to them.

In her former life, Caroline was a prosecutor and white-collar criminal defense attorney. A graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Yale College, and the University of Virginia School of Law, she currently lives in Washington, D.C., with her two smart and strong daughters, her diabetic cat, an adorable mostly-deaf dog, and her saint of a husband. When she's not working with clients, writing books that make a difference, or spending time with her family, she can usually be found playing tennis or dreaming about her next trip to the beach.



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# Thank You

Thank you for reading NEXT! I hope it helps you grow a successful business that's right for you and your family. If you're determined to do the hard work of change this year, I'd love to see if I'm the right person to come alongside you and help. Simply go to [www.callwithcaroline.com](http://www.callwithcaroline.com) to schedule your free one-hour consultation.

I'd also love to hear your thoughts on the NEXT Steps. What worked for you? What didn't? What did you love? What's missing? NEXT is a new process. There's plenty of room to tweak, refine, and better it, so I welcome your feedback, whether positive or negative. I trust that it will be exactly what I need in order to continue my own growth process so I can serve my people better.

You're welcome to email me at [caroline@carolinegreenecoaching.com](mailto:caroline@carolinegreenecoaching.com).