

## *30 Ways to Succeed*

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Ever dreamed of opening your own business? Ever think of how great it would be to own a beauty boutique? Ever say, I am the one-in-a-million statistic who can actually go into business with my family and come out unscathed? Well look no further. My anecdotal recipe for success awaits you.

The first prerequisite of succeeding in today's competitive world of small business is to have grown up poor, ideally in the 1980's, and to subsequently have read Tony Robbin's "Unlimited Power." Ideally, the copy you will have read will be a signed version by the guru himself, brought home to you by your older sister who has successfully completed his hot-coal-walk/seminar.

Why are these important prerequisites you might ask? Because only these two experiences will adequately set the stage for another day in time, twenty years later, when this same sister of yours, who will by then have mastered the art of living like a celebrity, suggests that you-- her creative, artsy, opposite, who, too busy reading literature all these years, has forgotten to master her destiny,-- "put an organic juice bar" next to the hair salon that she has been running successfully for twenty years in middle-class Long Island suburbia.

Now, despite how obvious it is to you that your sister (who incidentally trains with supermodel Giselle's personal trainer, and flies to Switzerland to have a biological dentist remove her silver filings) is clearly positioning herself for personal access to fresh, organic juice, and is not all that interested in the dollars and sense of things, hear her out. For one, she makes what you jokingly, but aptly call a "surgeon's salary" in her salon. For another, she never did

give up financial power, as you did when you got married and foolishly believed that a traditional, if not clichéd, housewife role would work for you.

Reminded of your own foolishness, if not irritated by it, actually entertain the idea of this juice bar, even though you know better. Your moderately successful career as a restaurateur (something had to support that reading habit all these years) has taught you that three things matter above all else when starting a business: location, location, location. And while you can see how very poor this location would be for a juice bar, how terrible the parking is, how very little visibility the storefront has with its “suburban blur” of being a skinny strip store between traffic lights that cars whiz past, object to the concept, but not too persuasively. Because after all, you do need *something* to get you out of the house.

Say something stupid to your sister like, “Why don’t we open something complimentary to your salon like, I don’t know, say... a makeup store?” And when your sister says, “but can it still have a juice bar?” not only agree to squeeze one into this ridiculous makeup idea, but come up with a cockamamie concept for a beauty bar, featuring “inner and outer beauty products,” and then do something really stupid:

Wholeheartedly believe in the idea.

Tell yourself things like, “Beauty really does start from the inside out,” and connect with a vitamin company to find out what supplements help beautify skin, nails, and hair. Get interested in things like biotin, glutamine, alpha lipoic acids, DMAE. Create juice concoctions like Gorgeous Greens, Red Carpet Red, and Beach Beauty. Use impressive words like “bioflavonoids, anti-aging, and skin-smoothing” in your beverage descriptions.

Then focus on the makeup and beauty products despite having been a tomboy your whole life, or having virtually defined your core identity as “the brains” and your sister “the beauty.”

Tell yourself that you believe in things like peptides and hyaluronic acid and, regardless that your dermatologist tells you that most topical ingredients are molecularly too large to permeate the epidermis, believe the shiny marketing anyway. I mean, really believe in it- because you are, after all, pushing 40, and the time for just mascara and gloss, or for washing your face with Dove soap, or for letting your curly hair air dry, were probably coming to an end anyway. How have you not known about things like eye primer? And more importantly, how have you managed to live without them?

Build a brand in your black marbled notebook by setting “clean beauty” parameters. Paraben-free, phthalate-free, heck, why not go for cosmetically-safe (when possible... always have that catch phrase handy, because there are so many ingredients, it’s hard to make sense of them let alone adhere rigidly to that term). And of course, above all else, only entertain products that are cruelty free, because let’s face it, you are way more into the welfare of animals than beauty.

Sign a lease and find the most expensive contractor around who tells he is the cheapest, and because you still have mommy brain with a toddler at home and don’t feel like staining and painting anything yourself, and because you are split between home and that toddler and don’t have the time you once had when you started those café’s in your twenties and thirties, give this contractor a retainer. You need one person to get it all done, especially since the store is far away. By the way, go ahead and tell yourself that it’s not a big deal that the store is a 45 minute drive from your house because your celebrity sister swears that she will use her infrastructure from her neighboring salon to run the store, and you can simply “pop in and out” on occasion, if you even want to. Let your ego be stroked when she tells you what an amazing “sprinter” you

are to get the store to the finish line of opening where you will then pass the baton to her, the “marathon” runner, who will maintain and grow the store for years to come.

Hold up your end of the bargain and get the store built. Only buy the best because you are creating a store of beauty after all, and things have to be, well, beautiful. Choose a Hamptons style look because it’s a look you know nothing about and that has nothing to do with the south shore neighborhood of Long Island in which it will be located. Choose an expensive wood floor with gray whitewash, buy crystal chandeliers, and an expensive lighting design to finish this heavenly canvas for the colorful products to pop off those shelves. After deciding the store looks “too nice” add back an indie artistic feel by finding a graphics design artist on Etsy, buying her print of a floating mermaid holding a basket of eggs that somehow speaks to you of fertility and birth. Pay thousands of dollars to have this print customized, blown up to mural size, and wallpapered on. Regret this decision instantly but do nothing about it when everyone asks you why there is a mermaid holding a basket of eggs and what’s it that got to do with makeup and juice.

Next, buy products, and feed an apparent shopping addiction you didn’t even know you had. Buy ten extra SKU’s of everything! Make a decision mid-way to become an Indie Sephora, housing all beauty departments with a natural bent: makeup, skin care, body care, aromatherapy, soap, brow care, lashes, tanners, teeth whiteners, hair products, depilatory products, nail polish. Get it all in there, under one roof, so you can really confuse the hell out of your customers when you display these luxury cosmetic items next to vitamins, bananas, and protein bars.

Pick the best faucets no one will ever see for the juice bar and spa room. Pick expensive fixtures and tile for the bathroom. Sign a lot of change orders. Believe the contractor when he tells you that the store was originally outfitted with residential wiring and that he cannot in good

conscience sign his name to the job without redoing the interior of the walls completely. Accept, too, when the landlord tells you that he will not contribute to this problem. Every other tenant in the history of his ownership has made do. Find out after speaking to other tenants that no one has ever stayed in that space for more than a few years. Realize there is no turning back now, and build a nice new store for your landlord and continue on with your “only the best” motto and have customized poured concrete for your countertops. Make more bad judgment calls, like picking a black and white logo for your sign that will blend into the cream colored storefront, to really ensure no one will ever find the place.

Keep pulling money out of yours and your sister’s home accounts, jeopardizing your daughters’ college educations. Tell your husband it will all come back. Tell yourself that as you push back and push back the budget. Ask yourself why people even bother with budgets, especially people with shopping disorders who have not been properly diagnosed. Tell no one of the embarrassing amount of money you sink into a “one thousand square foot store.” Vomit a little in your throat as you tally that number in your head, and then never add numbers again.

Give select people a sneak peek during the six months it takes for you to see the design to completion. Have people tell you what an amazing idea this is- disregarding the notion that any time anyone has ever told you what a great idea something is, that it usually turns out to be your worst idea.

Open the doors, ring up \$1500 in 15 minutes and see yourself sipping Pina Coladas on vacation in St. Barts that winter.

Never see that much money rung in again in one shot.

Watch the numbers go up a little, down a lot, up a little more, down a lot more. Have no idea of the rhyme or reason of any of it. Rely heavily on service staff that may or may not be

good, and have no gauge in knowing because people are polite and because you really never had a facial before opening this place. Come to think of it, you never had your eyebrows or makeup done either.

Take a long time—almost two years-- to realize how terrible your staff is, and to see that no one is really rebooking, that if anything, this staff is quite possibly making women feel and look worse. Realize that this handful of “makeup artists” are actually just young girls who would be better off going to college but barring that, at least need to practice at the mall, not your cute little store where there are loyal salon customers who you actually have to see every four to six weeks. Hire mature, stable people, who will at least not try a Kardashian look on a sixty year old mother of the bride; but still have no way of knowing if these mature artists are any good either.

Agree to your sister’s idea of hiring a Feng Shui consultant. Pay money to be told there is too much metal and not enough fire in your store. Appeal to the God of Feng Shui and add more fire into the store by adding reds and rusts and purples. Add more wood and earth as well. As you fluff the new pillows and light purple candles every day, wonder if it’s possible for a space to be cursed, or wonder if you are just stupid. Decide it is both and change the physical address of the store since yours, 2785, breaks down to 4, the Chinese number that sounds like death. Act like you don’t know what the problem or mix up is when vendors can’t find you. Change your computer passwords too while you are at it. Then sit back and watch as these changes make zero difference.

Forgive your sister when she treats the store like an annoying stepchild, because you know you really only have yourself to blame and because even if she denies it, you can tell that she is still suffering from post-partum depression with her one-year-old, which come to think of it, you should have seen from the get-go. Forgive her too for putting down the store and its stale

offerings because like you, she does not want to reach into her pocket to spend more on it, and she doesn't know what the hell to do to fix things.

Bring in a partner who knows what the hell she is doing. Because she is a friend, be honest with her about your journey to date so that there is no resentment if it doesn't work. Watch her save the store, getting rid of most of the makeup and add purses and clothing and costume baubles. Watch the numbers climb and then the store nosedive again into a plateau of "getting by" because some things are not meant to be saved. Understand that you are all smart women, and it's not your fault. Well, it is, but don't beat yourself up about it.

Try last ditch efforts and different formulas. Spa specials, Groupons, and freebies. (Try not to feel rejected when a customer looks you straight in the eye and declines a free makeover). In this vein, roll up your sleeves and decide to learn about the business, reminded by the reality TV show, Tabatha's Salon Takeover. Realize that salon owners need to know their business from the ground up, not be passive bystanders.

Consult with women over eyebrow arches and Rosacea. Prescribe squalene for their wrinkles—derived from olives, of course, not sharks; they have enough problems with human's weird obsession over Shark Fin Soup. Unfold your crinkly tips and throw them onto the bed where your husband is laying. Make prostitution analogies and cry laughing as he watches you unamused, and perhaps a bit fearfully.

Keep doing it anyway and totally disconnect from your soul so that you won't even cringe when people tell you that beauty is your calling.

As the store build a better reputation, watch the numbers plod along in a no man's land, not a total failure, but not a success either-- kind of like marriage, but that requires another list.

Close the juice bar portion of the store with a sigh of relief. Admit that you have only been selling a few smoothies a week and that it has been costing you money to keep it open. Laugh to yourself when your sister doesn't care about that part, since she has been buying juices elsewhere. Besides, she has since switched to a high-protein paleo diet.

Never give up. Well, maybe give up going to the store, but never give up hope of success, even if it's for another store in another location in another life. You can be anything you want to be. The power is yours!

Find peace as you settle back into your clichéd housewife existence, grateful for the life you tried so vehemently to escape. Know that you win some and lose some. Remember that we have but a brief existence and success is a mindset. If that doesn't work, think of Hamas and Israel. Think of Ebola. And get on with it.