



tips

the art of the start

maker & me

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the intro

how I made my
own way

maker & me

how I made my own way

I wrote this book in the hardest season of my life.

I was navigating a separation, walking away from a shared business, co-parenting young children, and carrying weight I didn't recognise – physically, emotionally, spiritually. The kind of weight that lives in your body long after the circumstances have changed. That sits in your shoulders, your jaw, your chest. That wakes you up at 3am with a racing heart and a mind that won't stop.

Rebuilding felt overwhelming. And yet from that pressure came a quiet resolve: I wanted to take charge of my experience and shape my life according to my own needs and desires, not anyone else's. Not the version of me that had been built by expectation, conditioning, and years of doing what made sense on paper. The real one. The one I could feel underneath all of it, waiting.

I'd been an entrepreneur for ten years. But starting over alone felt different. The fear was different. The stakes were different. I was different. And the woman doing this rebuilding – she was someone I was still getting to know.

So I did what I always do when I'm overwhelmed. I wrote things down. The steps I knew. The frameworks that had worked. The reminders I needed on the days when doubt was louder than drive and the business felt impossibly far from where I wanted it to be. The words I needed someone to say to me at 5am when the kids were asleep and I was sitting alone wondering if any of it was going to work.

Slowly, those notes became this book.

how I made my own way

What I know now, two years into that rebuild, is that none of our experience is separate. The way you feel in your body affects how you show up in your business. The way you parent reflects what you believe about freedom. The relationship you have with money is a mirror of the relationship you have with yourself. The nervous system that's been running on stress and survival doesn't suddenly switch off when you sit down to create. The beliefs you were handed about what a good life looks like don't disappear just because you've decided to want something different.

The business, the body, the becoming – it's all one thing. And the more I've learned to treat it that way – to move my body, to regulate my nervous system, to trust my intuition, to live from a place of creative flow rather than fear and force – the more everything has started to shift. Not just the business. Everything.

This book focuses on the business thread – because having income that's yours, built on your terms, is one of the most profound acts of self-determination available to us. Especially for women who have spent years building lives around everyone else. There is something deeply powerful about creating something that is entirely yours. That carries your voice, your vision, your values. That generates income because of who you are and what you know – not because you showed up and traded your time for someone else's dream.

But I want you to know, as you read it, that the business is never really the point. It's the vehicle. The point is the life you're building around it. A life that feels true. That has room for all of you – not just the productive, achieving, holding-it-together parts. All of you.

I'm still building mine. I don't have it all figured out. Some days are beautiful and full of creative flow and deep knowing. Some days are hard and uncertain and I question everything. Most days are both at the same time.

how I made my own way

But I've learned enough to know that the people who change their lives aren't the ones who wait until they're ready – they're the ones who start before they are. Who take one imperfect step while everything is still unclear. Who trust that clarity comes from doing, not from waiting.

Within these pages you'll find everything you need to begin – how to shape your idea, understand your customer, craft your first offer, build a brand that sounds like you, price with confidence, and create a business that lasts. But more than that, you'll find permission. Permission to start before you're ready. To be in process. To build something real from exactly where you are right now.

Because this is what I've come to believe – building a business is one of the most creative acts available to us. It's taking everything you are – your experience, your instincts, your way of seeing the world – and turning it into something tangible, something of service – to yourself and to others. And in the process, creating a life that feels like art.

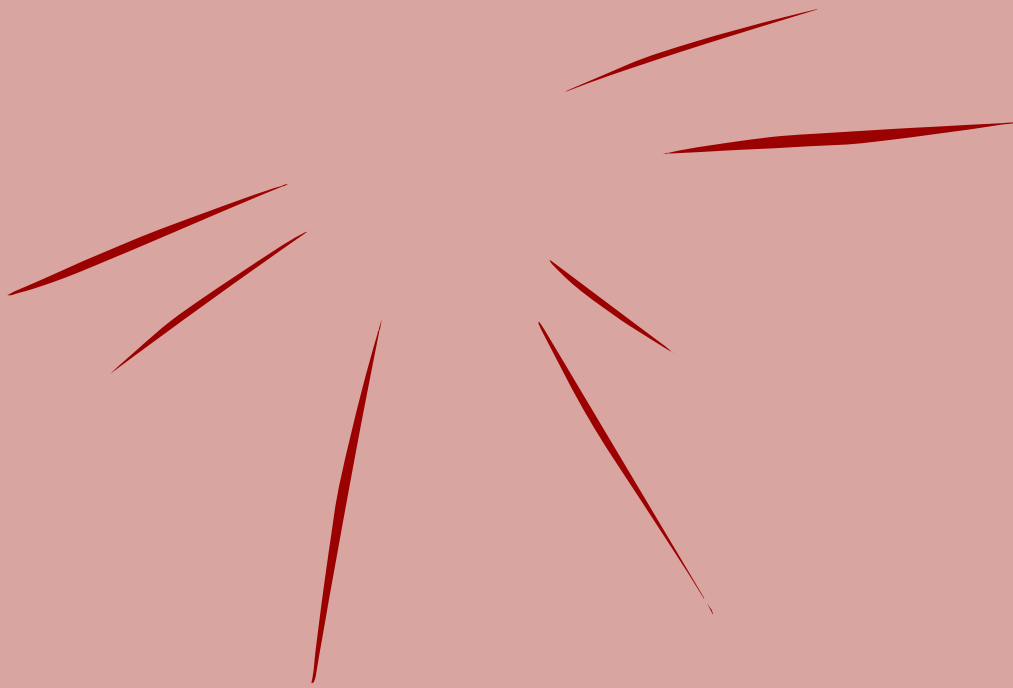
That's what *The Art of the Start* has always been about.

And it begins here. With you. Right now. Exactly as you are.

– Sophie x

how I made my own way

the intro



*In the end, we only regret the chances
we didn't take.
~ Lewis Carroll.*

the start

start where you
stand

maker & me

start where you stand

Starting over isn't easy.

Whether you chose it or it was chosen for you, beginning again takes courage.

It's confronting. It's uncomfortable. It's exhausting. And it can be scary. But it's also the beginning of something new. A chance to reset, to be intentional, to build on your terms. A chance to turn a dream into reality, to step into a *youer* version of you.

It's not about waiting until everything's perfect (it never will be).

It's about starting where you are, with whatever you have.

Showing up when it's hard.

Taking action even when you're unsure.

Moving forward with consistent, efficient steps – one at a time.

You don't need everything figured out.

You don't need things to be neat or polished.

You just need to begin.

Maybe you're coming out of a breakup.

Maybe you're stepping into a new career.

Maybe you've moved somewhere new.

Or maybe you've simply decided it's time for a change.

Wherever you're starting from, use it to your advantage.

Every experience you've had, every lesson you've learned, is the wisdom that will guide you into what comes next.

You're not starting from nothing, you're starting stronger than you think.

So forget waiting to feel ready, for the perfect moment, or for permission.

You'll never be handed a green light. Motivation won't carry you. What you need is commitment, and discipline.

start where you stand

You don't build the life you want by standing still.
The only way forward is through action – imperfectly, consistently, with whatever you've got.

Clarity and confidence don't come from thinking. They come from doing. You'll refine as you go. You'll iterate in motion. You'll strengthen as you take action. And your story, the one you're living right now, is the backbone of your brand.

Being open about the real parts, the evolving parts, the parts you're still figuring out isn't a liability. It's credibility. It's your edge. It's what makes people interested in you, trust you, relate to you, and want to buy from you.

You don't need to hide where you've been.
You don't need to make yourself smaller, or bigger, or fit some 'perfect' mould.
People connect to truth.
They resonate with people who've been through change and kept going.
They trust authenticity, quirks and all.

So...

Don't bury it.
Build with it.
Own who you are, own where you stand, and use it as fuel.

Once you take that first real step, you're already on your way.



start where you
stand

the start



He who has begun his task has half done it.

~ Horace

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the stuff

work with what
you've got

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work with what you've got

You might be telling yourself you need:

- More time
- More money
- More experience
- More connections
- More confidence
- More clarity

But here's the truth: you don't.

If you go looking for an excuse, you'll find one.
And if you wait for perfect conditions, you'll be waiting forever.

What you need isn't perfection, it's permission.
And the only person who can give that to you... is you.

A few other things you'll need are:

- A vision (even if it's fuzzy)
- A willingness to figure things out as you go
- Determination, resilience, and grit
- A phone, tablet, or laptop

That's it.
That's all you need to begin.

Everything you think you lack can be built along the way.

work with what you've got

the stuff

You'll learn what works by doing.

You'll grow your confidence by keeping promises to yourself.

You'll meet the right people when you start showing up.

You'll gain clarity by taking action.

And if you're not convinced, let's break it down further...

We All Have The Same 24 Hours In A Day

You'll need to get resourceful with what you do have, be open-minded, be flexible. If you think you don't have enough time, wake up at 5am and get an hour of focused work in before your family's up or your day kicks off. Cut out the distractions. Stop scrolling. Be honest and accountable about how you're spending your time. Waiting at the bus stop, in the car at school pickup, sitting in a waiting room – those are pockets of time you can use to build. Open your notes app. Make a plan. Send an email. Get something done. We all have the same 24 hours in a day. The difference is in how we choose to use them. Choose wisely.

Resourcefulness Trumps Resources Every Time

You might think you need a big budget to start, but that's not true. Use free tools. Adopt a pre-sale model to minimise up front costs.

Offer a service first to generate cash flow. Reinvest instead of spending. Borrow gear, do trades, collaborate, work with what you have.

Resourcefulness trumps resources every time. Plenty of people have started with nothing and built something successful, because they moved, and they got creative. Stop waiting for money to show up. Start showing up, and let the money follow.

work with what you've got

Everyone Begins At Zero

No one starts as an expert. Everyone begins at zero. The difference is that some people start anyway. Experience comes from doing, not planning. You don't need more credentials, you need more action. That's how you gain experience. Start where you are. Learn as you go. Be transparent. Share your process. Let people see you grow – it builds trust. The people you admire got good because they were willing to be beginners first. So don't let "I don't know enough" stop you. Start now, and in six months, you'll have some experience.

Be Generous, Be Consistent, Be Helpful

You don't need an existing network, you need courage. Introduce yourself. Reach out. Comment, connect, collaborate. Use your existing circles. Show up where the people are that you want to connect with.

Be generous, be consistent, be helpful. Relationships are built over time, not overnight, but they only grow if you tend to them. You're not too late and you're not too small. Most people are just waiting for someone else to make the first move. Be that person. Build your circle on purpose.

The Confidence Will Come

Confidence isn't something you're born with, it's something you build by doing the thing you're scared of. No one feels ready at the beginning. Confidence grows every time you keep a promise to yourself, take a risk or show up despite the nerves. Don't wait to feel confident before you take action – take action, and the confidence will come. Keep your word to yourself. Take small steps daily. Prove to yourself that you're capable, and you'll start to believe it.

work with what you've got

Clarity Is a Result, Not a Requirement

Clarity doesn't come from overthinking, it comes from doing. If you're stuck in indecision, it means you need to move. Action leads to insight. Try something, test something, build the first version. Pay attention to what feels aligned and what doesn't. Pick a direction and go for it. Commit to the willingness to explore – the fog lifts as you walk the path. Clarity is a result, not a requirement.

So, here's what it really comes down to...

Work with what you've got, do what you can, and keep consistent when the motivation wanes – because it will.

I promise you, small consistent steps will get you where you want to go. Pay attention to the progress.

I'll say it again: pay attention to the progress.

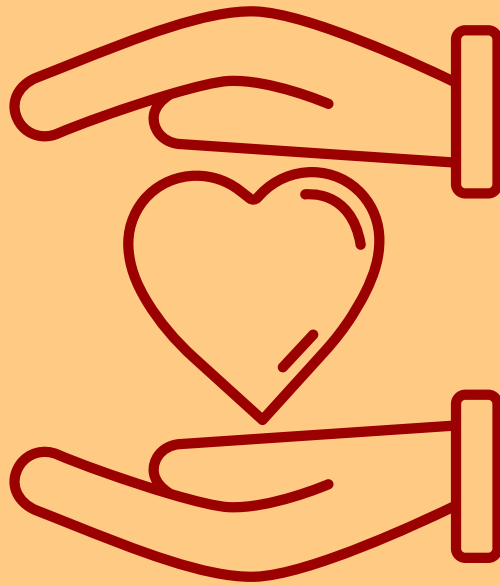
Let your satisfaction lie there.

And remember, when you're deeply connected to your purpose, you'll find a way.



work with what
you've got

the stuff



*It's not resources but resourcefulness that
ultimately makes the difference.*

~ Tony Robbins.

the idea

shape the **spark**

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shape the spark



You have an idea, or at least the seed of one.
Maybe it's messy.
Maybe it doesn't make total sense yet.
Maybe you can't truly fathom its existence in reality.

Does something keep circling in your brain when you're trying to fall asleep?
Do you keep coming back to something in your journal, your camera roll,
your saved posts?
Do you find yourself talking about, reading about, hunting for, dreaming about
something again and again?
A thing that keeps nudging you even when you try to ignore it?
Or maybe your idea's already crystal clear – you know exactly what you
want to create, and it's just waiting patiently for you to do so.
Wherever you're at, these are all good signs. They mean you're onto
something.

For now, just pay attention to your idea. Be curious about it. Be present with
it.

This is the part most people skip.
They try to jump ahead to the finished business without sitting with the idea
long enough to understand what it wants to become.

Your only job right now is to make space.
To explore. To play.
To allow the concept to be dynamic before it solidifies.
To follow the thread of what feels real, alive and aligned in you.

Because that's where your best work will come from.

shape the spark



Honing your ability to fully acknowledge and honour those flickers of inner truth that come quietly, persistently or profoundly to you (no matter the area of your life), is where your highest self will be made. It's your evolution calling to you. Practice trusting it. Your intuition is where the magic happens.

Once you've allowed your idea some space to evolve, clarify or shapeshift, you next need to start thinking about how it could look within the context of your values.

Starting a business is about you taking control over your life. It's about building something that's yours, something that fits the future you want. The you, you want to be. You're in the driver's seat, and you don't need to ask anyone for permission. So use this opportunity to wholeheartedly create what will work for YOU – don't settle for anything less.

Being clear about what you're trying to create, what that life will feel like, what it will look like, will help guide you. Knowing your values will keep you on track – you'll need to rely on them again and again to inform your decision making as you grow.

Ask Yourself

- Do you want flexibility so you can be present for your kids?
- Do you need financial stability after years of uncertainty?
- Are you trying to prove to yourself that you can build something strong on your own?
- Do you want to work from home?
- Do you want to travel?
- Do you want to create beauty? Solve a problem? Be of service?
- Do you want autonomy over your time and choices?
- Do you crave creative expression?

shape the spark



- Do you want to be a changemaker?
- Do you want to support ethical and sustainable practices?

And if you're not sure yet, keep asking. Keep being curious. Get honest about what matters most to you, as this will become your compass.

This part doesn't have to impress anyone else, it just has to be meaningful to you. Being honest about how you want your business to serve you will allow you to create something that fits the vision you hold for yourself.

Because... when things get messy (and they will), when motivation dips (because it will), when comparison sneaks in (you know what I'm going to say) – you'll come back to this. Your vision. Your reason. Your real-life purpose behind it all.

Start Giving It Shape

Next, let's start getting a sense of what this idea could become. Ask yourself:

- What kind of service, offer or product might this turn into?
- Who might it be for?
- What need or desire does it speak to?
- Is it something people would use, experience, wear, read, or learn?
- What problem does it solve, or what feeling does it create?

Beginning to name it, describe it, and imagine its shape and purpose will help you stay connected to it, and start thinking of it as something real.

At this stage, just stay in motion by continuing to give your idea room to grow, and it will.

shape the spark



Then... Get It Out of Your Head

Don't underestimate the power of writing it down. Whether it still feels silly or half-baked, or has already become quite clear.

Write it. Describe it. Sketch it. Voice-note it.

Get it out of your head and into the world – it doesn't matter how roughly formed it is. Just let it live outside your mind.

Because vague ideas stay stuck, or get lost. But once you give shape to a thought, you can begin to work with it, and you will begin to see it more clearly.

Recap

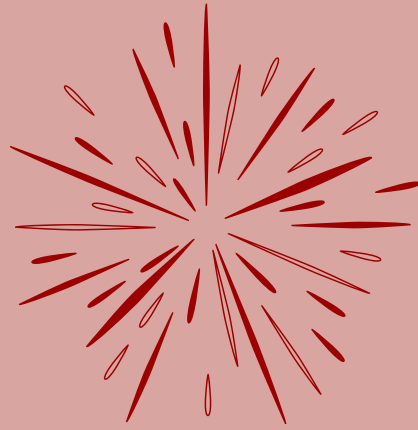
So, you've followed the spark, you've paid attention to what's been pulling at you, and given your idea the space to take shape. You've explored how it aligns with your values, your lifestyle, and the kind of future you want to build.

To move on to the next chapter, you need to finish up brainstorming and land on a clear idea about what it is you will be building. Exciting!

shape the spark



the idea



*Your dream can be made reality
by taking it seriously.
~ Susan Hayward.*

the customer

know **who** you're
creating for

maker & me

know who you're creating for

You know what you want to build. Now make sure it lands.

At this point, you've clarified your idea. You're not guessing at what you want to create anymore, you're clear on what you want to offer, and why it matters.

Now it's time to focus on who it's for. Because even the best ideas fall flat if they don't speak to someone's real need, desire, or frustration.

This is where you shift from creating for yourself, to building with others in mind.

Turning an idea or passion into a business means remembering this: it's not just about what you love to make, do, or provide – it's equally about who it's meant to help, move, or serve.

This chapter is about deeply understanding the person on the other end. Not changing your idea to fit the market, but making sure you know exactly how to communicate its value in a way that connects. So you're not just building something great, you're building something people get, want, and are willing to pay for.

Why It Matters

People buy for two main reasons:

- To solve a problem
- To feel something

You're not here to push your product on people. You're here to make sure what you're offering connects with the right people – the people who want or need it.

know who you're creating for

That means understanding:

- What they're already struggling with
- What they're hoping to feel
- What they've already tried (and why it didn't work)
- What they value and prioritise
- What fears, hesitations or objections they have
- How they decide what to spend money on
- Where they already go for advice, inspiration or solutions
- What language they use

Understanding these things helps you speak to your audience in a way that resonates deeply and builds trust. You need to know what they're already struggling with, the real pain points they're facing, and what they're hoping to feel instead, because every decision is driven by the desire for an emotional shift.

It's also essential to understand what they've already tried and why it didn't work, so you can position your offer as the right alternative. Pay attention to the language they use when they talk about their problems or goals; using their words makes your message feel instantly relevant.

You also need to be clear on what they value and prioritise, whether that's quality, ease, ethics, or affordability, and what might be holding them back, like fear, doubt, or overwhelm.

Knowing how they make buying decisions helps you guide them with confidence, and understanding where they already go for advice or inspiration helps you meet them where they are and stand out in the places they're already paying attention.

know who you're creating for

the customer

Because the more clearly you see them, the more clearly they'll see the value in what you're offering. And when you can articulate their needs better than they can, you earn their attention, and their trust.

Let's break these elements down a little further...

You're Not Creating for Everyone

Remember, your offer is not for everyone, and nor should it be. Your goal isn't mass appeal. It's resonance. Specificity. Relevance. Think of one real person. Picture their life. Get close to what they feel, think, and do:

- What's hard for them right now?
- What are they trying to fix or improve?
- What will bring them joy?
- What have they already tried?
- What are they googling late at night?
- What are they daydreaming about?

Will your offer help them:

- Save time?
- Bring beauty or peace into their day?
- Help them move forward?
- Solve a problem?
- Offer inspiration?
- Feel seen, understood or more confident?
- Improve their health?
- Entertain them?
- Educate them?

Know who you're creating for

Understanding this person is your starting point—they're who you're building for.

Translate Your Idea Into Their Language

This is where most people get stuck. They describe their offer using their own words, through their own lens, with their own assumptions.

Don't do that.

Instead, ask:

- How would they describe the value in this?
- What would they say they're looking for?
- What would make them say: "Finally, this is what I've been needing"?

This isn't about dumbing anything down. It's about making the offer clear, accessible, and relevant.

The best copy doesn't sound clever. It sounds familiar.

Study What They Already Do

Look at their behaviour. You're not starting from scratch, you're just observing a dialogue that's already happening in their minds, and playing out in their actions.

- What are they buying right now to solve this?
- What content are they engaging with?
- Who do they follow or trust in this space?
- What is influencing their choices?

Know who you're creating for

You don't need a market research firm, just start by going where your audience already is. Here's how:

- Search for products or services like yours on Instagram, Etsy, Amazon, Google, or any platform relevant and specific to your niche. Read the reviews—especially the 3-star ones. They'll tell you what people wanted more (or less) of.

If you already have a relevant audience (even a small one):

- Check who they follow. Go to a follower's profile on Instagram or TikTok and tap "Following." Look at what brands, influencers, and communities they engage with. You'll start to notice patterns; the language, visuals, tone etc.
- Pay attention to what they like, save, share, tag and complain about. Look through their Stories, comments, and tagged posts. What products are they recommending? What content are they reposting?
- Ask them directly. Run a quick poll, question box, or survey: "*Who inspires you most in [insert topic]?*", "*Where do you usually go to learn about [insert result you offer]?*". The answers will give you insight fast.

If you don't have an audience yet:

- Find someone else's audience first. Start by identifying 2–3 brands, influencers, or creators who speak to the people you want to reach. Look at their followers, their comments, and what kind of content gets the most engagement.
- Use search tools like Instagram keywords, Pinterest, TikTok, or Reddit. Type in phrases your ideal customer might use: "first time mum sleep tips," "eco home swaps," "starting a candle business," etc. This will lead you to creators, products, or forums full of your ideal people.

know who you're creating for

- Join niche communities. Think Facebook groups, Reddit subs, Slack channels, Discords – wherever conversations are happening. Read more than you post. Watch what gets the most responses and why.

Track patterns. Don't just look at one comment and think that's the end of it. Look for themes. What do they keep struggling with? What keeps showing up?

This will give you relevant context, so you can position your offer clearly and confidently in a way they will understand.

Position Your Offer to Fit Their World

(AKA your Positioning Statement)

A positioning statement is a short, clear sentence that defines:

- What you offer
- Who it's for
- What problem it solves or result it creates
- Why it matters

What it's used for:

Clarifying your own focus – it helps *you* get clear on your audience, your value, and how you stand out, so you don't drift or try to be everything to everyone.

Shaping your messaging – you use it to guide:

- Your homepage headline
- Your Instagram bio
- Product descriptions

Know who you're creating for

the customer

- Pitch decks
- Social media captions
- Email intros

It's the thread that runs through all your communication.

Making it easier for others to talk about you:

If someone says "What do you do?", your positioning statement gives you (and others) an easy, confident answer.

Standing out in a crowded market:

It helps you differentiate by showing exactly who you're for and why your offer matters, without vague or generic language.

Think of it as your anchor, the one-sentence filter that keeps your business grounded, focused, and clearly aligned with what you're trying to achieve and the people you're trying to reach.



Let's get into it.

You're not just offering something to buy. You're offering a way to feel better, live easier, solve a problem, or move forward. That applies whether you're selling a service, a digital product, or a physical item.

Your customer needs to know:

- What you're offering
- Who it's for

Know who you're creating for

- What it helps with
- Why it's worth their time or money

If you can say that in one sentence? You're on track.

Positioning angles to work with:

- Make the outcome obvious
- Speak to the pain – then offer relief
- Anchor it to a specific person
- Make it tangible and actionable
- Sell the feeling, not just the thing
- Make the use case instantly clear
- Position it as a solution
- Tie it to what they value
- Make it giftable, shareable, or brag-worthy

Here are some examples of the different ways you can frame what you offer, depending on what matters most to your audience:

Examples in Action

"I help busy parents get healthy, home-cooked dinners on the table in under 20 minutes—no meal prep required."

→ *Outcome-focused, practical, and clear.*

"I teach freelance designers how to find better clients so they can stop saying yes to underpaid jobs."

→ *Speaks directly to pain and offers a specific result.*

"I help corporate professionals turn their skills into a service business they can run on their own terms."

→ *Anchors to a clear audience with a relatable goal.*

Know who you're creating for

the customer

"I help artists package their work into digital products they can sell online so they stop trading time for money."

→ *Tangible, specific, and action-oriented.*

"We make dresses that look like you tried – even when you didn't. Slip it on, walk out the door, feel fabulous."

→ *Sells the feeling, not just the fashion.*

"Our reusable activity mats keep kids focused and off screens during long dinners, car rides, or rainy afternoons."

→ *Clear use case with emotional benefit for parents.*

"We make natural deodorant that actually works – no itching, no white marks, and no midday reapplication."

→ *Solves real objections head-on.*

"Our handwoven baskets are made by women artisans in Ghana using traditional techniques – beautiful, functional, and fair trade."

→ *Speaks to values, culture, and ethics.*

"Our science-themed play kits turn your kitchen table into a kid-powered lab – the kind of gift they'll remember long after the wrapping paper's gone."

→ *Giftable, experiential, and memorable.*

Write your Positioning Statement

By now, you're not just building something you believe in—you're also shaping it for the person who needs it.

Take a moment to:

- Write a short paragraph about who your offer is for – one real person.

Know who you're creating for

- Write down the top 3 emotions or challenges they're experiencing.
- List 3 ways your offer creates value or relief for them.
- Note any specific words or phrases they use that you can echo in your messaging.

Now, let's refine it further so it can fit into one sentence:

I help / I create / I offer [your product or service]
for [who it's for – be specific],
to [the result it helps them achieve or the problem it solves],
so they can [emotional or practical benefit].

Example:

"I create activity mats for parents of young kids to keep them engaged and off screens during long dinners, so everyone can actually enjoy mealtimes."

This is what will get your work into the hands of the people who need it most.

In the next chapter, we'll shape all of this into a tangible offer.

Do not be too timid or squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson.

the offer

from dream to
deliverable

maker & me

from dream to deliverable

You've clarified the idea. You've aligned it with your values and vision. You understand who it's for. Now it's time to package that idea into a clear offer: a product, service, or experience with which others can engage – the first real connection point between your vision and the people it's meant to serve.

This chapter is where you move from dream to deliverable. Your job now is to define exactly what you're offering, how it creates value, and why it's the right fit for the person you've just come to understand.

Let's get into it.

Firstly, as you go through this chapter, remember that no matter how much of your vision you're tackling right now, you're not building the final version, you're building the *first* one.

Do not get lost in the minutiae, do not get caught in comparison traps, and do not get stuck in perfectionism. Just get the ball rolling, you can iterate and refine as you go.

First, Define the Format

What are you actually selling?

Is it:

- A physical product? (e.g. a handmade item, curated box, print)
- A digital download? (e.g. template, guide, checklist)
- A service? (e.g. consulting, design, coaching)
- An experience? (e.g. workshop, class, retreat)
- A hybrid? (e.g. product + workshop, digital + 1:1 support)

If you're still unsure about how best to get started, ask:

from dream to deliverable

What's the simplest way I can deliver value to one person right now?

Then, Set the Scope

Now get practical. What does the offer actually include? Be specific. Ambiguity kills sales because confusion always leads to hesitation.

Define:

- What they get (deliverables or experience)
- How they get it (download link, live call, physical delivery, in-person session etc.)
- When they get it (immediately, access dates, on-demand, frequency)
- What support or access looks like (ongoing, one time, office hours)

Keep It Lean

You do not need:

- A product line
- A full suite of services
- A content calendar

You need:

- One clear offer
- That helps one real person
- With one specific problem or desire

That's it. Get that working first. Add on as you go.

from dream to deliverable

Finally, Clarify the Outcome

What does your offer help someone *do, feel, or solve*?

You've already mapped the customer's challenges and desires. Now tie your offer directly to those.

People don't buy 'a journal' or 'a workshop'.
They buy focus, calm, confidence, relief, a shortcut, a transformation.

In the previous chapter, you wrote a positioning statement – a one-sentence summary of what your business does, who it's for, and why it matters. That was about the *bigger picture*. Now we're zooming in.

This section is about the specific result your first offer delivers. You're not describing your entire brand or body of work, just this one product, service, or experience.

If your positioning statement already reflects this first offer clearly, great, use it here. If not, create a focused version that ties this offer to a concrete outcome.

Do *not* try to do too much with your first offer.

Don't aim to serve *everyone*.

Don't try to solve *everything*.

Don't build the whole empire at once.

Keep it sharp and specific. The clearer the promise, the easier it is to sell.

Ask:

- Who is this specifically for?

from dream to deliverable

- What specific problem or desire does it address?
- What does it help them do, feel, or become?

Start your offer description like this:

"This [product/service/workshop] helps [person] [achieve outcome or feel something]."

Examples:

- "This template pack helps overwhelmed creators plan a month of content in one hour."
- "This 90-minute session helps new founders find clarity on what to launch first."
- "This handmade kit helps people slow down and reconnect with themselves."

That's what people pay for. Outcomes, not features.

Your offer should feel like it was made for your customer, because it was.

Before You Move On

Take what you know about your customer and start building the actual first version of your offer, not the fantasy version. The real, sale-ready one.

Recap

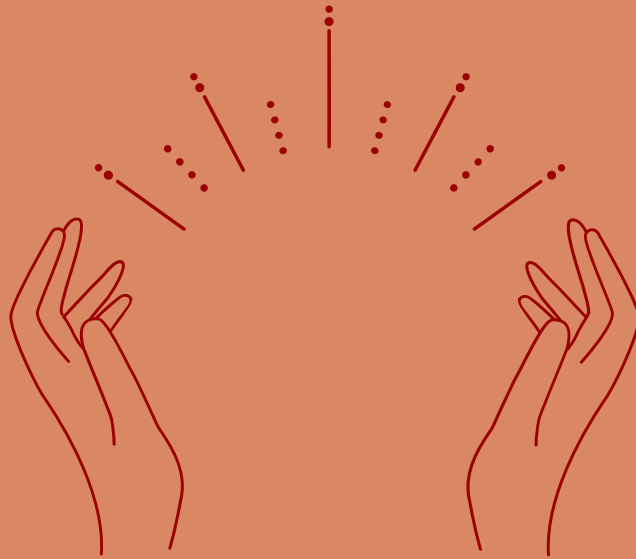
Checklist:

- I know exactly what I'm offering
- I know the result it helps someone get
- I know what's included and how it's delivered

from dream to deliverable

- I can describe it clearly in one sentence
- I've started crafting a deliverable version of my offer

In the next chapter, we'll work on the practical setup of your business.



*A man is a success if he gets up in the morning
and gets to bed at night,
and in between does what he wants to do.
~ Bob Dylan.*

the setup

lay your foundations

maker & me

lay your foundations

Before you can put your offer out into the world or take your first sale, you need to set up your foundations – the legal, logistical, and digital elements that make your business legitimate.

This is the stuff that turns a concept into a company, that protects your intellectual property, and that makes you searchable, credible, and secure.

It's critical. Don't skip it.

Secure Your Business Name

Check for availability across three key areas:

- Business registry in your country (e.g., ASIC in Australia, Companies House in the UK, Secretary of State in the US)
- Domain name (try .com first, but .co, .studio, .shop etc. are fine too)
- Social handles (Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn – wherever you'll show up)

If your name is taken in any of these areas, consider modifying it before you get attached. Try adding a word, changing spelling, or reordering your sequence of words.

Once it's available across the board, you should register it immediately by following the next steps.

Buy Your Domain Name

Don't wait. Even if you're not building a website yet, owning your domain locks in your brand and shows you mean business.

lay your foundations

Use services like:

- [Namecheap](#)
- [Google Domains](#) (if still available in your country)
- [GoDaddy](#)

Buy the main domain (e.g., yourbusinessname.com) and any simple variations (e.g., yourbusinessname.co, yourbusinessname.com.au etc.).

Register Your Business

This depends on your country, but the key steps usually include:

- Choosing a business structure (sole trader, LLC, company, etc.)
- Registering your business name
- Getting your tax number or ABN (Australian Business Number), EIN (Employer Identification Number, USA), or equivalent

Use your official government site, not a third-party service, to register directly and avoid extra fees.

Protect Your IP (Intellectual Property)

Do a basic check to make sure you're not infringing on someone else's trademark.

Search:

- Trademark databases like USPTO, [IP Australia](#), or UK IPO
- Google
- Social platforms
- The App Store (if you're planning digital tools)

lay your foundations

If your name, logo, or tagline is totally unique and you plan to scale or license, register your own trademark once you're ready. (You don't need to rush this in the first 30 days, but know it's worth doing once revenue starts coming in.)

Open a Business Bank Account

Don't mix business and personal. It gets messy fast.

Set up a separate account to:

- Receive payments
- Track expenses
- Keep your finances clean for management, taxes, funding, or potential investors

You'll need your business registration and tax number to open most accounts.

Set Up a Simple Accounting System

Start clean from Day 1. You can use:

- Software like Xero, QuickBooks, or Wave
- A bookkeeper (even part-time or freelance)
- A basic Google Sheet to start, with clear income/expense columns

Log every dollar in and out. Get into the habit early.

Secure Your Social Media Handles

You don't need to post yet, but claim your business name on all the platforms you may eventually use:

lay your foundations

- Instagram
- Facebook
- TikTok
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Pinterest

Set Up Your Email

Then, set up a professional email address using your domain, something like hello@yourbusinessname.com.

You can do this through Gmail for Business (Google Workspace), Zoho, GoDaddy or ProtonMail.

Choose a Payment Processor

Decide how you'll take money when you're ready to sell. Options include:

- Stripe (great for websites and digital products)
- PayPal (widespread but fees are higher)
- Square (ideal if you're selling in person or via a reader)
- Shopify Payments (if you're using Shopify for ecommerce)

Test the setup now so that when your offer is ready, payment won't hold you back.

Draft Simple Terms & Privacy Policy

If you're collecting emails, running a website, or selling anything, you'll need some basic legal coverage:

lay your foundations

- Use a terms and conditions generator
- Get a privacy policy that complies with relevant local laws
- If selling physical goods, write a refund & shipping policy

You can hire a lawyer down the line, but for now, done is better than perfect. Try tools like:

- [Termly.io](https://termly.io)
- Shopify's free policy generator
- [GetTerms.io](https://getterms.io)

Get Insured (If Applicable)

Depending on your industry, you might need:

- Public liability insurance (if people visit your premises or you attend markets)
- Product liability (if you sell physical goods)
- Professional indemnity (for coaches, consultants, creatives)

Don't skip this if your business involves people, products, or advice. It protects you from lawsuits and unexpected costs.

Choose a Digital Home Base

You don't need a full website to start, but you do need a place people can find you. Start with:

- A simple one-page site (via Carrd, Squarespace, or Linktree)
- Or a landing page with email signup (via ConvertKit, MailerLite, Flodesk or Systeme)
- This becomes your digital HQ, where your offer will live when you're ready.

lay your foundations

In Summary - Your Setup Checklist:

- Business name available across domain, socials, registry
- Domain name purchased
- Business officially registered
- Tax number or business ID secured
- Social handles claimed
- Business bank account opened
- Accounting system or spreadsheet in place
- Email setup
- Simple site or landing page created
- Payment processor tested and ready
- Basic legal policies live
- Insurance assessed (if needed)

This step isn't optional. It's what makes your idea bona fide, viable, and legally yours.

Once your foundations are in place, it's time to start on your branding.



*Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration,
the rest of us just get up and go to work.
~ Stephen King.*

the brand

brand it like you
mean it



brand it like you mean it

Branding is the total experience someone has with your business.

What they feel.

What they remember.

What they say about you when you're not in the room.

It's how you show up, visually, verbally, and emotionally, across every touchpoint. Whilst you can hire an agency to build it for you, this chapter is about doing it yourself.

The goal: a consistent, cohesive identity that your audience instantly recognises, feels aligned with, and trusts.

At its heart, branding is about shaping perception. It's what sets you apart, builds recognition, and creates loyalty. Done well, it doesn't just make you memorable, it drives real business value.

Every aspect of your brand is an opportunity to reinforce your values and strengthen the relationship with your audience. Because when they feel aligned with your brand experience, that's when loyalty and long-term equity are built.

In the pages ahead, I'll walk you step by step through building your brand toolkit: your logo, fonts, colour palette, messaging, imagery, and marketing assets. By the end, you'll have everything you need to create a brand that connects, resonates and lasts.

Note: I use Canva to prepare all my brand elements, so at the end of each step I'll include an "In Canva" action you can follow to build your Brand Kit the same way.

brand it like you mean it

Step 1: Prep

Decide first, design second. Before you touch colours or logos, let's recap on how you've defined the foundations of your brand so far:

- Audience: Who is this for? One sentence.
- Promise: What result do they get from you?
- Three brand words: e.g., "calm, crafted, confident."
- Values: 3–5 non-negotiables.
- Voice: Where you sit on the spectrum: Formal ↔ Casual, Playful ↔ Serious, Warm ↔ Direct.

Output: Ensure these questions are answered – they're the backbone of your brand guidelines.

Step 2: Your Logo

Your logo is the visual anchor of your brand. It doesn't have to be overly complicated or expensive to create, it simply needs to be clear, recognisable, and aligned with your brand's personality.

Think of your logo as the face of your business: the mark that instantly signals "this is us." When designing yours, keep these principles in mind:

- Simplicity – a logo should be easy to recognise at a glance. If it only looks good blown up on a billboard, it's too complex.
- Scalability – it needs to work in all sizes: on a website header, a business card, or an Instagram profile picture.
- Relevance – your logo should feel in sync with your brand values, industry, and audience—without being a cliché.
- Timelessness – avoid leaning too hard into design trends that will feel dated in a year or two.

brand it like you mean it

If you're DIY-ing your logo, tools like Canva, Looka, or Adobe Express are great starting points. If you want something more custom without the cost of an agency, platforms like Fiverr or 99designs let you collaborate with freelance designers.

Remember: your logo doesn't need to tell your entire brand story – it just needs to be a clear, consistent visual marker that represents you wherever your brand shows up.

What to create (your logo toolkit):

When you're done, you should have a small set of logo files you can use anywhere without stress. At minimum, create these:

- Primary logo (wordmark): Your business name in a clean, legible font. This is your "main" logo for most uses (website header, packaging, presentations).
- Secondary logo (variation): A simplified version – stacked, shortened, or horizontal – for when the full version doesn't fit.
- Icon or monogram: A symbol, initials, or mark that works in very small spaces (Instagram profile, website favicon, packaging sticker).
- One-colour version: A black (or neutral) version of your logo for when colour isn't possible, like print, embossing, or overlays.
- Transparent background files: Make sure you have PNG or SVG versions so you can place your logo on any background.

With just these 5, you'll be covered for almost every brand touchpoint without needing 20 complicated variations.

Rules of thumb:

- Simple, not complex.
- Make sure it scales down and still works at 24px.
- Avoid trends that will date quickly.

brand it like you mean it

In Canva

Pro plan:

- Go to Templates → Logo and choose a simple base design.
- Replace the placeholder text with your business name, then adjust spacing and alignment.
- Duplicate the design to create your one-colour version and your icon/monogram version.
- Export each as SVG (scales infinitely) and PNG with transparent background.
- Upload all versions into your Brand Hub → Brand Kit so your logos are always ready inside Canva.

Free plan:

- Go to Templates → Logo and select a simple design.
- Replace the placeholder text with your business name, then adjust spacing and alignment.
- Duplicate the design to create a black/neutral version and an icon/monogram version.
- Export each as PNG with transparent background so you can place your logo on any background.

Step 3: Fonts & Typography

Fonts set the tone for your brand before you even say a word. They influence how professional, approachable, or creative you appear. Together with your logo, they create a sense of brand identity that's instantly recognisable.

brand it like you mean it

Consistency in fonts builds brand recognition and helps manage your brand across touchpoints. Don't underestimate this, it's a small detail that makes a big difference in how cohesive your brand feels.

What to choose:

- 1 heading font: bold and attention-grabbing, used for titles and statements.
- 1 subheading font: the same as the heading font but not bold.
- 1 body font: simple, clean and legible across digital and print.
- 1 quote/accent font (optional): something with flair –handwritten, script, or quirky, used sparingly for emphasis or personality.

Rules of thumb:

- Pair contrasting fonts (e.g., serif + sans serif).
- Set a type scale (e.g., Heading 32, Subhead 24, Body 16).
- Be consistent with case (Title Case vs sentence case).

In Canva

Pro plan:

- Go to Brand Hub → Brand Kit.
- Under Brand Fonts, set your Heading, Subheading, Body and Quote fonts.
- Save. Now, every time you design in Canva, your chosen fonts will be ready in one click.

Free plan:

- Open a blank Canva doc (e.g., an A4 or Instagram Post).
- Type sample text for Heading, Subheading, Body and Quote.

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- Apply your chosen fonts and sizes (e.g., Heading 32, Subhead 24, Body 16, Quote 24).
- Label each one clearly and save the page as your Brand Board. This becomes your quick reference guide until you upgrade.

Step 4: Colour Palette

Colour is one of the fastest ways to trigger memory and emotion in your audience. Think of Coca-Cola red, or McDonald's yellow – you know them instantly. That's brand equity in action.

What to choose:

- 1 primary colour (the dominant one used most often).
- 2-3 secondary colours (to support and create balance).
- 1-2 neutral tones (for backgrounds, text, and negative space).

Aim for 3–5 colours total to keep things simple and versatile. Too many shades and your brand starts to feel messy and inconsistent.

Tip:

Look into colour psychology – different colours evoke different feelings (e.g., blue = trust, green = growth, yellow = optimism). While you don't need to box yourself in, it's worth aligning colours with the emotions you want your audience to associate with your brand.

Rules of thumb:

- Keep it simple – no rainbow explosions.
- Test contrast for readability.
- Name your colours (e.g., "Ocean Blue" not just HEX #003366).

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In Canva

Pro plan:

- Go to Brand Hub → Brand Kit → Colours.
- Add your chosen colours by pasting in the HEX codes (e.g., #FFD784).
- Name each colour for easy reference (e.g., "Ocean Blue," "Dusty Rose").
- Your palette will now show up automatically in Canva whenever you design.

Free plan:

- Open your Brand Board document.
- Add coloured squares for each of your chosen brand colours.
- Label each square with its HEX or RGB code and (optionally) a simple name.
- Save this page so you always have your colours handy when designing.

Step 5: Messaging & Voice

Your brand isn't just how it looks, it's also about how it sounds.

Messaging is where you communicate your values, personality, and promises in words.

Every brand has a tone, whether intentional or not – make yours deliberate.

Ask yourself, if my brand were a person, how would it talk? Would it be:

- Bold and direct?
- Calm and considered?
- Warm and supportive?
- Expert and efficient?

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Choose a tone that reflects your brand's personality, will resonate with your audience, and best carries your values and beliefs, whether it's your own voice or one you've defined for the business.

Then use it consistently across:

- Product descriptions
- Website copy
- Emails
- Captions
- Packaging
- Customer service

The more harmonious your brand voice becomes, the more recognisable and trustworthy your business will feel. Consistency creates trust and makes your brand memorable.

Value Pillars & Proof Points

Your value pillars are the 3–4 core promises your brand stands on – the qualities or values you want your audience to associate with you every time they interact with your business. Think of them as your brand's non-negotiables.

But values on their own can feel vague, so for each one, add a proof point: a concrete way you back up that value. This turns your values from words into action.

Why this matters:

- Value pillars = what you stand for.
- Proof points = how you actually deliver on those promises.

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Together, they make your brand voice authentic and credible instead of just buzzwords.

Step 1 – Define your pillars

Pick 3–4 qualities your brand will always stand for. (Think: what you want people to say about you when you're not in the room.)

Fill in:

- [Value Pillar] – We [what you do] so that [audience outcome].
- [Value Pillar] – We [what you do] so that [audience outcome].
- [Value Pillar] – We [what you do] so that [audience outcome].
- (4th optional)

Step 2 – Add proof points

For each pillar, write down *one concrete way* you deliver on that promise.

Fill in:

- [Value Pillar] – We [short explanation].
 - → *Proof point: We show/deliver this by [specific action, process, or result].*

Example filled out (Product Brand):

- Sustainability – We design products that last and reduce waste.
 - → *Proof point: Every product is made with 100% recycled materials and shipped in compostable packaging.*
- Accessibility – We make style affordable without sacrificing quality.
 - → *Proof point: Our best-selling pieces are all under \$50.*

brand it like you mean it

- Community – We believe business should give back.
 - → *Proof point: 5% of every purchase funds local artisan training programs.*

Create these now:

Once you've defined your values and voice, put it into practice with these four essentials:

- One-liner – A simple sentence that explains what you do, who you help, and how.
- *Formula:* "We help [audience] get [result] without [pain], through [approach]."
- Tagline – A short, memorable phrase that captures your brand's essence.
- Three value pillars with proof points – Your non-negotiables, each backed by evidence.
- Word rules – Decide on the language you will and won't use.

Example:

One-liner:

We help busy professionals build healthy habits without overwhelm, through simple, step-by-step meal prep and wellness routines.

Tagline:

Build better habits, simply.

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Value Pillars with Proof Points:

- Clarity & Focus – We make wellness simple and actionable.
 - → *Proof point: Clients follow our 3-step weekly meal prep system with zero guesswork.*
- Support & Accountability – You don't have to do it alone.
 - → *Proof point: Weekly check-ins and community support keep clients on track.*
- Sustainability – Healthy habits that last.
 - → *Proof point: Our program emphasizes practical routines you can maintain long-term, not quick fixes.*

Word Rules:

- Always use: simple, practical, actionable, encouraging, supportive.
- Avoid: overwhelming, gimmicky, "quick fix," unrealistic, jargon.

In Canva

Pro plan:

- Go to Brand Hub → Brand Kit → Brand Voice.
- Add your one-liner, tagline, value pillars, and word rules directly into the Brand Voice section.
- Canva will then suggest your brand tone and words when you write captions or copy in Canva's editor, keeping your messaging consistent across designs.

Free plan:

- Open your Brand Board document in Canva.
- Add a page titled Messaging & Voice.

brand it like you mean it

- Write in your one-liner, tagline, three value pillars with proof points, and word rules.
- Save this as your go-to reference when writing content.

Step 6: Visual Identity

Your brand isn't only defined by logos and colours – it's also in the images and visuals you choose. Photos, illustrations, and graphics create the world your brand lives in. Everywhere your brand interacts with your audience should feel like it belongs to the same story.

Decide on your visual approach:

- Faces: Use your own, your team's, or your customers' to build connection and trust.
- Objects: Focus on your products or tools if you want a clean, minimal look.
- Environments: Capture spaces, lifestyle moments, or contexts that reflect your brand values.
- Concepts/Illustrations: Use drawn, animated, or abstract visuals if you want something more symbolic or playful.

Rules of thumb:

- Stick to one or two dominant styles (e.g., lifestyle photography + hand-drawn doodles).
- Be consistent with filters, lighting, or illustration styles—avoid mixing polished stock images with grainy iPhone photos unless that's intentional.
- Choose images that support your brand words. For example, "calm, crafted, confident" might mean warm neutrals, artisanal textures, and relaxed lifestyle shots.

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Practical next steps:

- Create a mood board: 12–15 images that represent your brand's look.
- Save your chosen editing presets or filters so every photo has the same finish.
- Build a brand library in your files or your photos: a folder of approved images, illustrations, and textures.

In Canva

Pro plan:

- Go to Brand Hub → Brand Kit → Photos/Graphics.
- Upload 12–15 images, illustrations, textures, or graphics that reflect your chosen visual style.
- Apply consistent filters, edits, or adjustments so all visuals have a cohesive finish.
- Save this page in your Brand Kit so it's always accessible when creating new content or sharing with a team.

Free plan:

- Open your Brand Board document in Canva and add a page called Mood Board.
- Upload 12–15 sample visuals that represent your brand's look and feel.
- Apply the same filters or edits to each image for a consistent style.
- Save this page as your reference guide whenever designing posts, graphics, or presentations.

brand it like you mean it

Step 7: Core Templates

Templates save you hours and keep your brand consistent. Decide which are relevant essentials for you, create them, and use them on repeat.

For example:

- Instagram post (square).
- Reel/Story cover (vertical).
- Email header.
- Website banner.

- PDF or slide cover.
- Pinterest.

Rules of thumb:

- Keep layout consistent, vary only text/images.
- Lock margins and grids so your designs look polished.
- Always place calls to action (CTAs) in the same spot (e.g., bottom-right).

In Canva

Pro plan:

- Canva's Brand Kit holds logos, fonts, colours, and brand visuals, but not templates.
- To manage templates, create them separately in Canva, then save them into Brand Hub → Brand Templates.
- Build each template type you need (Instagram post, Reel/Story cover, email header, website banner, PDF/slide cover, Pinterest).

brand it like you mean it

- Apply your brand fonts, colours, and logo. Lock margins and grids to keep layouts consistent.
- Once saved as Brand Templates, you (and your team) can duplicate and use them anytime for new content.

Free plan:

- Open your Brand Board doc in Canva and add a page called Templates.
- Create one page per template type (e.g., Instagram post, Story cover, PDF cover).
- Apply your fonts, colours, and logo manually. Use alignment tools or locked grids for polish.
- Duplicate these pages whenever you need to design new content – your Brand Board doc becomes your go-to template library.

Step 8: Your Brand Kit in Action

By now, your Brand Kit should include all the core elements that make your brand recognisable and consistent. At minimum, it should contain:

- Logo files – All versions: primary, secondary/variation, icon/monogram, one-colour, and transparent background files.
- Fonts – Names, hierarchy (heading, subheading, body), and usage rules.
- Colour palette – HEX/RGB codes, names, and usage guidance for backgrounds, text, and accents.
- Voice & tone guidelines – Your brand tone, one-liner, tagline, value pillars with proof points, and word rules (what to say vs what to avoid).
- Templates – Ready-to-use designs for social media posts, Stories/Reels covers, email headers, slide/PDF covers, Pinterest pins, or any recurring brand asset. Include grid/margin rules and any locked elements for consistency.

brand it like you mean it

- Mood board / visual examples – Photos, illustrations, textures, and filters that represent your brand style.

Why this matters

Your brand kit isn't just a folder, it's a tool for making every piece of content and communication consistent. Here's how to use it day-to-day:

- Content creation – Pull fonts, colours, templates, and mood board visuals directly from your kit to create posts, emails, PDFs, or social graphics.
- Freelancer or agency briefs – Share your kit when hiring designers, copywriters, or social media managers so they instantly understand your visual style, tone, and messaging.
- Marketing materials – Refer to your logo files, templates, and colour palette for packaging, print collateral, banners, or ads.
- Quality control – Use your kit to check every new asset against your brand standards: colours, fonts, tone, and imagery should always align.
- Updates and evolution – Keep the kit updated with new templates, refreshed visuals, or tweaks to your tone as your brand grows, so your identity stays cohesive over time.

Living document reminder: Your brand kit is a living document – update it as your brand evolves, but always keep these core elements consistent so your audience instantly recognises you.

Step 9: Export Pack

Now that your Brand Kit is complete, it's time to gather all your assets in the right formats so you never have to scramble later.

brand it like you mean it

What to export:

- Logos: Primary, secondary/variation, icon/monogram, one-colour versions. Export as SVG (scales perfectly) and PNG with transparent background. Include light and dark versions if applicable.
- Social icons: Export at 1080×1080 PNG for Instagram, Facebook, and other social platforms.
- Favicon: Export as 32×32 PNG for websites and apps.
- Templates: Export both editable Canva files and PDF copies for easy use or sharing.
- Guidelines: Export your Brand Guidelines as PDF for quick reference and keep an editable master for future updates.

Naming convention:

Use a clear, consistent naming system for files so you can find anything instantly:

brandname_asset - variation_color_format

Example: *makerme_logo_primary_dark_svg*

Tip: Organise all exported files into clearly labelled folders (e.g., Logos, Templates, Guidelines, Social Assets) underneath a Brand Kit parent folder. This keeps your brand kit accessible for you or anyone working with your brand.

brand it like you mean it

In Canva

Pro plan:

- Open each design (logo, template, social icon, etc.).
- Click Share → Download.
- Choose the appropriate format: SVG for logos, PNG with transparent background for icons, PDF Print for templates and guidelines.
- Name files using your naming convention (e.g., *brandname_logo_primary_dark_svg*) and save to your organised folders.

Free plan:

- Open each design.
- Click Share → Download.
- Free plan doesn't support SVG, so export logos as PNG with transparent background where needed. PDFs are available for templates and guidelines.
- Name files using your naming convention and store them in clearly labelled folders.

Step 10: Consistency Across Touchpoints

Make it easy for people to recognise and trust you – everywhere.

This is the difference between looking polished and looking scattered. Managing your brand means showing up the same way everywhere.

When your fonts, colours, logo, imagery and voice align across all platforms, you create a sense of professionalism and reliability. Consistency isn't about being rigid, it's about being recognisable. And over time, that consistency becomes your reputation.

brand it like you mean it

Here's a checklist to help keep your brand aligned:

Profile + Visual Presence

Make sure your profiles reflect your brand visually and verbally:

- Instagram: Profile photo (logo or on-brand image)
- Facebook: Profile + cover images
- LinkedIn: Logo or personal photo
- Pinterest: Profile photo + board cover style
- Google Business: Profile image
- TikTok / YouTube: Channel cover + profile
- Email signature: Logo, name, and brand voice

Social Content

Ensure all posts, Stories, and Reels reflect your brand identity:

- Use your brand colours and fonts in Canva (via reusable templates)
- Reels/thumbnails: consistent title style (font, color, layout)
- Captions follow your tone of voice
- Highlight covers use your brand palette
- Stories feature on-brand language and visuals

Website + Communications

Every digital touchpoint should reflect your brand visually and verbally:

- Homepage: brand colours, fonts, and messaging
- Product/service pages: consistent tone and voice
- Email templates (Flodesk, MailerLite, ConvertKit): branded headers, buttons, fonts
- Lead magnets, PDFs, or eBooks: follow visual identity

brand it like you mean it

Packaging or Product (if applicable).

Physical items also communicate your brand:

- Packaging uses logo and brand colours
- Product photography reflects brand mood and style
- Inserts or thank-you cards use your brand voice and fonts
- Invoices: include logo, fonts, and colours

Tip: Keep your brand elements in one place.

Store everything in a central hub so you can reference it anytime you're:

- Creating content
- Designing materials
- Hiring freelancers or agencies

Suggested tools:

- Canva: Design social templates, PDFs, and more; create a Brand Kit for drag-and-drop ease
- Flodesk / MailerLite: Build branded emails
- Notion: Internal brand hub (mood board, voice guide, photo references)
- Google Drive: Store logos, templates, and assets in organised folders
- Planoly / Loomly / Meta Business Suite: Schedule content while keeping brand visuals consistent

brand it like you mean it

the brand

Wrap-Up

By now, you have everything you need: a logo, fonts, colours, voice, templates, and brand guidelines. This is your brand toolkit – your reference for showing up consistently, whether online, in print, or in person.

Remember: your audience doesn't fall in love with a single post, product, or email. They fall in love with the consistent experience you deliver over and over.

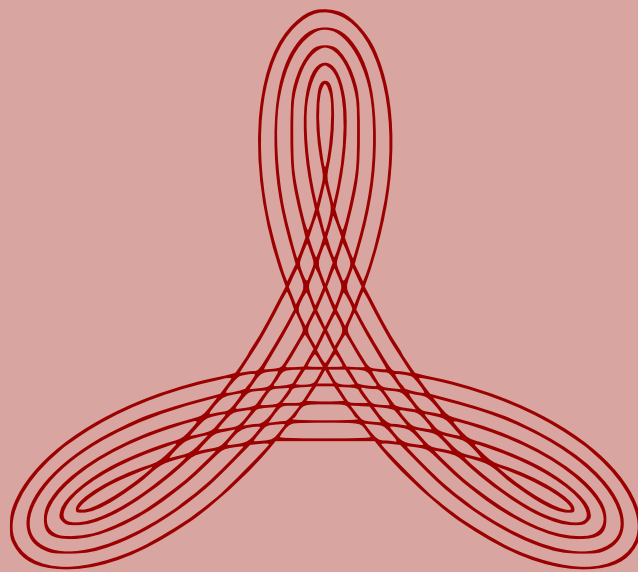
Use your brand to create a recognisable personality that reflects your values and serves the people you want to connect with.

When your visuals, messaging, and touchpoints all align, you create branding that lasts.



brand it like you
mean it

the brand



*Opportunity is missed by most people because
it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.
~ Thomas Jefferson.*

maker & me



what you bring is
what you **build**

the energy

what you bring is what you build

Every business has an undercurrent – a kind of atmosphere that people can sense, even if they can't name it.

It shows up in the tone of your words, the way you respond to challenges, and the care you put into what you create.

That undercurrent is your *energy*.

It's not mystical. It's the mix of your attitude, your values, and your presence. It's how you show up – and it quietly shapes everything you build.

You can have the same plan or tools as someone else, but if your energy is rushed, fearful, or disconnected, people will feel that. The same is true when you're clear, grounded, and genuine – that feeling carries through every part of your brand.

The Invisible Ingredient

You can feel the difference between a business built from pressure and one built from purpose. One feels heavy and transactional; the other feels steady and alive.

I've been in both places – the hustle that drains you and the flow that sustains you. And I can tell you, the difference isn't luck or timing. It's energy. The state you're in when you show up, create, and serve others.

When you're connected to what you care about, your ideas flow more easily. You make better decisions. You naturally attract people who respond to what you stand for.

When you're not, everything takes more effort. You start overthinking, forcing outcomes, or trying to prove your worth through results, instead of trying to connect. That's a sign you've drifted from alignment – not failure, just feedback.

what you bring is what you build

the energy

The energy behind your actions determines how they land. That's the invisible ingredient you mustn't overlook.

Energy as Integrity

Energy isn't only about how you feel, it's about how you live.

It's the quiet thread of integrity that runs through everything you do – how you work, how you love, how you show up for yourself, and how you show up for others.

When your words, actions, and intentions line up, you can *feel* it. There's a steadiness that comes from knowing you're walking your talk. You're not trying to perform, prove, or persuade – you're simply being who you say you are.

Integrity doesn't belong only in your business.
It should be felt across every part of your life.

If you want to build a thriving business, you need a thriving version of you behind it, one that lives by the same principles you build by. Because your business can only hold what you hold.

If you cut corners with yourself, if you overpromise, people-please, or abandon your own needs, that same energy seeps into your work. If you avoid hard conversations at home, you'll probably avoid them in business too. If you ignore your intuition in one area, you'll drown it out in others.

Every decision, big or small, is a chance to come back to integrity.
To choose what feels true over what feels easy.
To honour your word, your boundaries, and your own wellbeing.

what you bring is what you build

Your business isn't separate from your life, it's a reflection of it. So when something feels out of sync, instead of trying to fix the business, start by realigning *you*.

Ask yourself:

- Am I living in alignment with what I say I value?
- Does my day-to-day life reflect what I want my business to stand for?
- Where am I out of integrity – with my time, my energy, my relationships, or my own needs?

When you bring your whole life into integrity, everything starts to click.

The way you make decisions feels clearer. The way you create feels freer. The way you lead feels lighter.

Because integrity is the most powerful energy you can build from, it's the foundation that keeps everything else standing tall.

Authenticity Isn't a Strategy

Let's be clear: authenticity isn't a marketing angle. It's an energetic state. It's also one of the most overused words in online businesses, and one of the most misunderstood.

Being authentic isn't about revealing everything, telling your story for sympathy, showing your mess for clicks or making your story your brand. It's about alignment between who you are and how you show up.

what you bring is what you build

The most powerful brands aren't the loudest, they're the truest. They're the ones that feel real. If you speak the way you actually speak, share what you truly believe, and stop trying to sound like "a business," people notice. They relax. They trust you.

You can't fake that feeling. You can't replicate it with scripts or templates. Authenticity can't be engineered – it's *felt*.

Authenticity is less about sharing your truth and more about *operating from* it.

So before you post, launch, or sell, pause and check in: *Does this feel like me? Does it come from truth or from proving?*

If it's the latter, stop and realign. Because the energy of proving always repels. The energy of truth always connects.

The Resonance Principle

Everything you create carries traces of the state you were in when you made it. A rushed post feels rushed. A thoughtful one feels considered. A product built with care makes people want to care for it too.

You don't have to be perfectly calm or confident before you act, but it helps to pause before you publish or present and check in with yourself:

- Am I creating from pressure or from purpose?
- Am I reacting, or am I responding?

That one moment of awareness can change the tone of everything you put out.

what you bring is what you build

Staying Aligned Through the Ups and Downs

You can't control every outcome in business (or life), but you can control the energy you bring to it.

Even when you understand this, alignment isn't a one-time achievement – it's a daily practice.

You'll have weeks when everything flows, and others when nothing does. Energy fluctuates. Life happens. The goal isn't to stay high-vibe; it's to stay *aware*.

Notice when you're overextending, reacting from fear, or chasing validation. Those are early signs that you've drifted away from your centre.

When things feel off, don't push harder – pause and listen:

- Where am I out of integrity with myself?
- What feels forced, and what feels true?
- Am I building from love or from fear right now?

Practical rituals help here:

- Move your body before you make decisions.
- Ground before you create.
- Protect your mornings from noise.
- Close your laptop when your energy drops.

Energy management is productivity at its deepest level. Because when your energy is right, you get more done with less force.

Consistency of energy builds consistency of results.

what you bring is what you build

Your Business as a Mirror

Your business often reflects what's going on behind the scenes – not just operationally, but emotionally.

When things are flowing, it's usually because you're grounded and open.

When things feel stuck, it's often because you're resisting something – a truth, a change, a boundary you need to set.

The beauty of entrepreneurship is that it's one of the greatest self-development practices you'll ever take on. Every stuck moment, every fear, every failure shows you something about yourself.

Instead of judging it, observe it.

- If you're procrastinating, what are you avoiding?
- If you're burnt out, what are you over-giving?
- If you're scared to sell, where do you still feel unworthy?

That's not a judgment, it's data.

Business is one of the most effective feedback loops for personal growth. It shows you where your patterns, boundaries, and beliefs either support or sabotage you.

Pay attention to what's working easily and what always feels heavy. The pattern usually points back to something internal that wants your attention.

Your business grows as you do.

what you bring is what you build

the energy

The Frequency of You

At the end of the day, your business runs on you – your mindset, your energy, your integrity.

The most strategic thing you can do is take care of your state.

The most magnetic thing you can do is stay in integrity.

The most sustainable thing you can do is build from truth.

What you bring is what you build.

If you bring fear, you'll build fragility.

If you bring faith, you'll build flow.

If you bring love and service, you'll build something that lasts.

Energy isn't something to master. It's something to manage, thoughtfully, consistently, and with respect for your own limits.

So before you post, launch, or plan, come back to you.

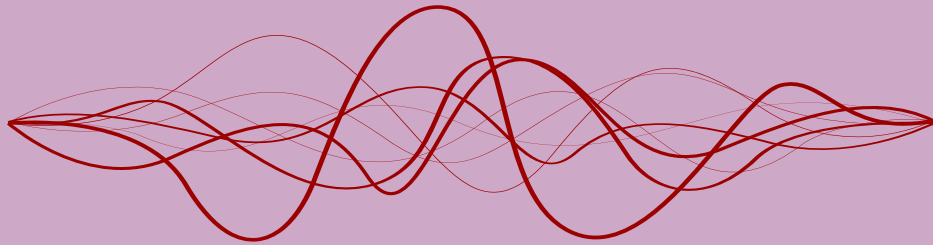
Because you're not just the maker of your business.

You're the energy it's made from.



what you bring is
what you build

the energy



*Everything is energy,
and that is all there is to it.*

*Match the frequency of the reality you want
and you can not help but get that reality.*

It can be no other way.

~ Albert Einstein



price it with purpose

the numbers

price it with purpose

Let's get something straight from the start: your business depends on you making money. If it doesn't make you money, it's not a business, it's a hobby with a logo. This chapter is about pricing with clarity and confidence, so that what you're building doesn't just look good or feel good, but actually works.

You're not here to scrape by. You're here to create something sustainable, something that supports your life and continues to serve the people who need what you offer.

Even not-for-profits have to generate enough revenue to stay in the game. If you don't charge sustainably, you can't keep going. And if you can't keep going, no one gets the value you've worked so hard to create.

It's easy to fall into the trap of pricing from fear – fear of charging too much, of being judged, of no one buying. But underpricing won't protect you, it's a trap. Low prices means more sales to make the same income, more marketing to find those sales, and more customers to manage. More work equals less profit, and a business that runs *you*.

Your pricing needs to support your business and your energy. If your offer leaves you tired, underpaid, and resentful, it's too cheap. You deserve to make a healthy living by charging fairly for the value you provide – pricing right makes that possible.

But sustainable pricing isn't just about supporting you. It's also about keeping your business alive so it can continue to help others. And if this side of things leaves you feeling uncomfortable, keep in mind: your offer is simply an opportunity. Whether or not to invest is always the customer's decision.

Pricing isn't about guessing, matching competitors, or charging what 'feels fair'. It's about knowing your costs, setting margins that sustain you, and building prices aligned with your income goals.

price it with purpose

In this chapter, you'll shift from guessing to knowing, and from hoping to planning. You'll learn how to price confidently using clear calculations and intentional strategy, so your work is profitable, sustainable, and worth your time.

So, let's make your business make money, on purpose.

Know Your Numbers

Before you price anything, you need to understand exactly what it costs to create and deliver your product or service. Knowing your numbers gives you a clear baseline – without it, pricing becomes guesswork, and guesswork rarely pays the bills.

To do this, run the following numbers:

1. Cost of Goods Sold (COGS).

This includes everything that goes into making your product or service, for example:

- Materials / ingredients
- Packaging
- Printing
- Shipping (what you pay)
- Platform fees (Etsy, Stripe, PayPal, etc.)

Why? Because these are unavoidable expenses you must cover on every sale.

price it with purpose

2. Time Cost

How long does it take to create or deliver your product or service? Assign a value to your time that recognises your skill and effort as part of the cost.

Why? Your time is valuable and deserves fair pay. Plus, if your business grows and you need to replace yourself, or you decide to sell it, pricing without factoring in your time won't hold up.

3. Overheads

These are the ongoing costs of running your business, for example:

- Website hosting
- Subscriptions (Canva, Adobe, etc.)
- Marketing spend
- Studio or office space
- Utilities
- Equipment upkeep

Divide your monthly overhead by the number of items you sell per month to get a per-unit estimate. Assuming you don't have sales data yet, make an educated guess and refine it as the data rolls in.

Why? Overheads keep your business running smoothly, ignoring them means you'll be undercharging without realising.

4. Don't Forget Taxes and Insurance

Depending on your location, you may need to include sales tax, VAT, or set money aside for income taxes and business insurance. Factor these into your pricing now, so they don't catch you off guard later.

price it with purpose

5. Track and Reassess Regularly

Expenses and sales fluctuate – revisit your numbers every few months to keep your pricing accurate and your business profitable.

Next up: Once you know your costs, the next step is to decide on your profit margin – i.e. how much extra you add on top to make your business viable and rewarding.

Set Your Profit Margin

Now that you know your costs, materials, time, overhead, and taxes, it's time to decide how much profit you want to make on each sale. Profit margin is the percentage or amount you add on top of your costs to create a sustainable business.

Why is profit margin important?

Because it's not just about covering costs – your business needs to grow, invest in new tools or products, and reward your hard work. Without profit, you're working at break-even or losing money.

How to choose your margin:

- Consider your industry standards, but don't just match them, price based on the value you provide and your income goals.
- A typical retail markup ranges from 30% to 100%, but this varies widely by product and market.
- Research price points of comparable products or services. You don't have to match these, but you should be informed about the market you're in.
- Start with a margin that feels realistic but sustainable, enough to pay yourself fairly and cover unexpected expenses.

price it with purpose

Calculating your price

Use the following formula to get a solid starting price:

A Simple Profit Formula

Here's how to price smart, even as a beginner:

Price = Total Cost Per Unit (COGS + Time + Overhead per unit) ÷ (1 - Desired Profit Margin)

Handmade Product Example:

- Materials (wax + jar + label): \$6
- Your time: 30 minutes × \$25/hr = \$12.50
- Overhead per unit: \$3
- Total cost per unit = \$6 + \$12.50 + \$3 = \$21.50

If you want a 30% profit margin:

Price = \$21.50 ÷ (1 - 0.3) = \$21.50 ÷ 0.7 ≈ \$30.70

Round up to a clean number like \$31 or \$32 – round numbers feel professional and approachable.

Digital Products Example:

- eBook creation time: 10 hours × \$40/hr = \$400
- Design software cost: \$30
- Website fees: \$15
- Total cost = \$445

price it with purpose

If you want a 40% profit margin:

$$\text{Price} = \$445 \div (1 - 0.4) = \$445 \div 0.6 \approx \$742$$

Since this might be too high for your market, consider adjusting your time rate or breaking it into bundles, courses, or licensing. Or you could also bring the price down and aim for volume. For example:

Pricing it at \$25 means you'd need to sell 18 copies to break even; the 19th sale onwards is profit.

Service Example:

- 60 minute consult + 1 hour prep/admin = 2 hours \times \$100/hr = \$200
- Payment fees = \$5
- Total cost = \$205

If you want a 20% profit margin:

$$\text{Price} = \$205 \div (1 - 0.2) = \$205 \div 0.8 = \$256$$

Charge between \$250 and \$260. This leaves room to reinvest and maintain your energy.

Why this works:

This method ensures you cover every cost AND make profit. It's scalable and flexible, you can adjust your desired margin based on your business goals and market.

price it with purpose

Remember:

Pricing isn't static, it's a tool you can adjust as you learn more about your market and business. Start with a confident price, monitor sales and feedback, then tweak as needed.

From Numbers to Goals - Crosscheck

Now that you've calculated your costs and set a price that covers them and your profit, step back and ask yourself:

- How many sales do I need each month to pay myself what I'm worth?
- Does this price reflect the value I provide and feel right for me?

Pricing isn't just about covering costs, it's about building a business that supports your life and goals. Crosscheck your pricing feels right by reverse-engineering your pricing based on what you want to earn, not on fear or guesswork. When you price intentionally, you create space to grow purposefully, and you also set yourself sales goals to work towards.

The Fear of Charging Enough

Let's talk about the fear:
"What if no one pays this?"

It's real, but often wrong. People pay for what they value. They spend \$7 on coffee. \$150 on skincare. \$400 on concert tickets. \$600 on a cashmere jumper. \$1200 on a phone.

Value is in the eye of the beholder. If someone wants or needs what you offer, they'll see it as worth the price. If not, they're simply not your audience.

price it with purpose

Don't cheapen your offering to please those who don't truly want or need it. Underpricing to be 'accessible' will just make you weary and frustrated. Instead, price based on your costs, your worth, and the value you deliver, then trust the right customers will show up.

Want to reach different budgets? Create tiers later. But don't start at the bottom and work your way up from burnout.

Profit = Sustainability

Wanting to make money doesn't make you greedy. It makes you strategic. It makes you responsible. You're building a business that works, not just one that looks good. If you want more for your life, only you can make it happen. The future you're building depends on it.

Reminder: You Can Pivot Later

Your first offer isn't set in stone. It's your starting point.
It gets you moving.
It builds confidence.
It teaches you what your audience wants.

You can tweak, refine, re-priced, or reinvent it later.
But first?
Make it available. Make it sell. Make it make money.



price it with purpose

the numbers



*Profit is not the purpose of a business,
but rather the test of its validity.*

~ Peter F. Drucker



create to connect

the content

create to connect



Content is how your brand speaks to the world – the words, images, videos, and emails that shape how people see and experience your business. It's not "extra." It's your brand in action.

Branding is the blueprint – your values, voice, and purpose. Content is the structure built from that blueprint. Without it, even the strongest brand stays invisible.

But here's the truth: not all content is equal. The best content engages, connects, and moves people to act. The rest drifts into the noise, unnoticed. People don't fall in love with products, they fall in love with meaning: the story, purpose, and values your brand represents.

You don't need to show your face if that's not your strategy. But you do need to consistently show what your brand stands for. Content is how you do that.

Your Content Compass: The Three Jobs of Content

Every post should serve at least one of these three purposes:

1. Build Connection (Story) – Create trust and emotional resonance.
2. Build Authority (Value) – Teach, inspire, or solve a problem.
3. Build Reach (Visibility) – Help new people discover you.

When planning a post, ask: does this build connection, authority, or reach? If yes, you're on the right track.

1. Build Connection: Story.

Connection and conversion come from trust, which means showing up honestly and consistently.

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How to build connection:

- Share your why: what brought you here and why this work matters.
- Go behind the scenes: show your process, your wins, and what challenges you face
- Highlight community impact: customer stories, testimonials, or moments that reflect your values.

Tips:

- Be authentic, not perfect.
- Treat every post like a conversation: reply to comments, answer questions, and acknowledge engagement.
- Show effort and intention. People connect with the journey as much as the result.

2. Build Authority: Value

Authority is earned by demonstrating expertise and solving problems. Valuable content positions you as someone who understands your audience and can help them.

Ways to build authority:

- How-to guides, tips, or step-by-step tutorials.
- Insights or advice based on your experience or industry knowledge.
- Myth-busting or problem-solving posts that clarify common misconceptions.
- Customer results or case studies showing your product or service in action.

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Tips:

- Focus on clarity over fluff. Teach something actionable.
- Repeat key messages in different formats: carousel, Reel, story, email.
- Authority builds trust, and trust leads naturally to sales.

3. Build Reach: Visibility

Visibility-focused content brings new people to your brand. Without it, even great content only reaches the same audience.

Ways to increase reach:

- Collaborate with other creators or brands.
- Use trending formats or shareable posts.
- Engage your community to invite new connections.
- Optimise posts for discovery – hashtags, captions, and SEO-friendly content.

Tips:

- Experiment with formats and platforms.
- Track what brings new eyes and double down.
- Visibility isn't vanity, it's the engine that allows connection and authority to grow.

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Content Pillars: Your Core Themes

Content pillars are your 3–5 recurring themes that guide what you post. They make planning simple and keep messaging consistent.

How to find your pillars:

- Look at your audience: what are their problems, questions, or desires?
- Look at your brand: what stories, expertise, and strengths do you bring?
- Connect the dots: where your audience's needs meet your value, you've found your pillars.

Example (Product Brand):

- Audience problem/desire: *"I don't know how your products are made."* → Pillar: Behind-the-scenes making (educates + builds trust).
- Audience problem/desire: *"How do I use this? Is it right for me?"* → Pillar: Product education (answers FAQs, highlights benefits).
- Audience problem/desire: *"Can I trust this brand? Do others like it?"* → Pillar: Customer stories (shares testimonials, creates proof).
- Audience desire: *"I want to connect with the person behind the brand."* → Pillar: Founder story (builds connection + brand values).
- Audience desire: *"I want inspiration and ideas for my lifestyle."* → Pillar: Lifestyle inspiration (inspires + shows brand fit).

How to use them:

Each week, rotate your posts across your pillars. This way, your content directly ties to audience needs, while keeping your message consistent.

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Example:

- Monday: Behind-the-scenes of production
- Wednesday: Customer testimonial video
- Friday: Product how-to Reel

Repetition Builds Recognition

Recognition builds trust, and trust drives sales. Say the same thing in different ways:

- Tell a story.
- Show your offer in action.
- Explain the problem it solves.
- Share customer experiences.
- Say why it matters to you.

Consistency matters more than perfection. Showing up steadily beats posting brilliantly once in a while.

Sell With Purpose

Selling is not gimmicks or pressure – it's confidence and clarity. Speak to people who genuinely need what you've made. When you believe your offer can help, your audience will feel it.

The framework for purposeful selling:

- Here's what I made.
- Here's why I made it.
- Here's how it helps.
- Here's how you can get it.

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Lead with your audience's problem, show how you solve it, and make buying easy. Selling is meaningful, it's creating solutions and delight, not just collecting transactions.

Example:

"I created this hand-poured candle because so many people told me they struggle to find scents that are natural and long-lasting. This blend lasts over 40 hours and is made from 100% beeswax. You can order it here [link]."

Keep It Doable

Content should be sustainable. Start small: 1–2 posts per week is enough to build your foundation. Use Stories more often to nurture your audience in between.

As you grow, you'll step up your posting frequency. The key is to increase gradually, so you build consistency without burning out.

Tips as you post more regularly:

- Batch content to reduce pressure.
- Repurpose posts across formats: one tip can become a Carousel, a Reel, and a Story.
- Focus on steady, consistent effort over short bursts of intensity.

Content is a long game. Play to win.

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Final Takeaway

By the end of this chapter, you should have:

- A clear understanding of the three jobs of content: Connection, Authority, Reach.
- A Content Compass for deciding what to share.
- 3–5 content pillars to guide every post.
- Confidence to show up consistently without burning out.

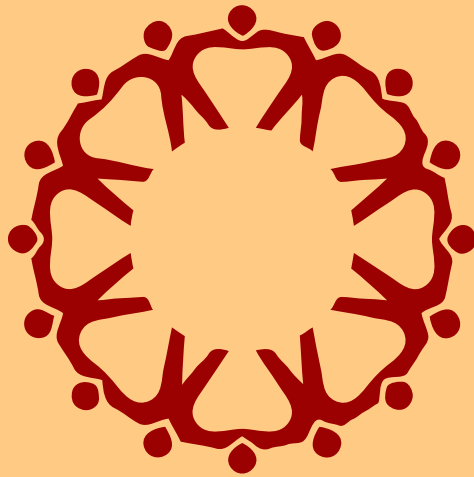
When content is done strategically, you're not just posting, you're building trust, authority, and visibility, which becomes the foundation your launches and sales rest on.



create to connect



the content



*Why not go out on a limb?
That's where the fruit is.
~ Mark Twain*



keep the **fire** burning

the momentum

keep the fire burning

Perfection is the enemy of progress.
And waiting until things are 'ready' is how people stay stuck.
The antidote to both is action, and action is how momentum is built.

You'll never have all the answers.
You'll never feel fully ready.
You'll never magically wake up with more time, more money, or more clarity than you have right now.

If you've been trained to second-guess yourself, to pause until things feel safe or certain – you're not alone.
But that mindset won't get you a business.
That's not meant to discourage you. It's meant to free you. Because once you accept that perfect isn't coming, you can stop waiting, and start doing.
This will apply again and again along your journey.

This chapter is about movement.
Small, daily wins. The discipline of showing up even when you don't feel like it, because *momentum beats motivation every time*.
Let's talk about how to build it, and how to protect it when life (inevitably) gets in the way.

Take the Next Step

Momentum doesn't come from grand strategies.
It comes from choosing to do the next right thing.
And then the next. And then the next.

That might mean:

- Sending one email.
- Building one landing page.

keep the fire burning

- Posting one product.
- Filming one reel.

Small steps, done consistently – quiet, gritty progress. That's how momentum is built.

Perfect is a Trap

Perfectionism wears a clever disguise:
It makes you feel like you're being 'careful' or 'professional' when really, you're stalling.

You're scared of judgment.
Scared of failing.
Scared of being seen trying.

Here's the truth: Everyone is clunky at the start.

Everyone feels like an imposter.
Everyone wants to hide sometimes.

But if you want to get somewhere with your business, you've got to feel the fear, and do it anyway.

Messy action still moves you forward. Overthinking doesn't.

Momentum over Motivation

Once you've let go of perfect, you still have to deal with another unreliable partner: motivation.

keep the fire burning

Motivation is fickle.
Some days, it shows up. Most days, it doesn't.

Momentum, though?
That's something you *build*.
And once you've got it, it carries you, especially on the days you feel like quitting.

So, focus on building momentum like a system:

- Choose a time to work on your business *daily* (even 30 minutes).
- Set ridiculously small goals (even one task per day).
- Track your wins (yes, even the tiny ones). Progress is addictive, but only if you recognise it.

Momentum doesn't require intensity, it just needs consistency.

Don't Break the Chain

This is one of the simplest ways to stay on track, even when your motivation is gone:

Do one thing for your business every day, and mark it off.

Build a visible chain of progress, something you can look at and say, "*I'm doing this.*"

Momentum isn't loud or flashy.
It's stubborn.
It's showing up when you'd rather not.
It's choosing action over overthinking.

keep the fire burning

the momentum

You're Allowed to Go Slowly, but You're Not Allowed to Quit

You might not be moving as fast as someone with a team, or an inheritance, or no kids. That's fine.

Your pace is not your problem. Quitting is.

So if you're moving slowly, make it steady. Momentum doesn't require speed. It requires consistency.

Just keep showing up. Even when it's hard. Especially when it's hard. That's how momentum becomes your superpower.

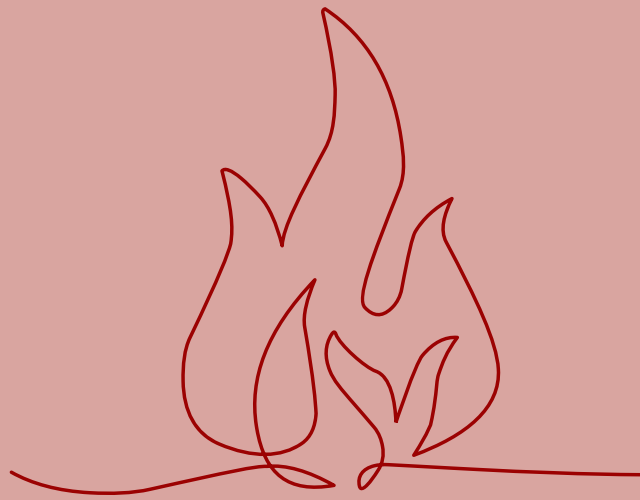
Remember: You don't need massive breakthroughs. You need *movement*.

A house is built one brick at a time.

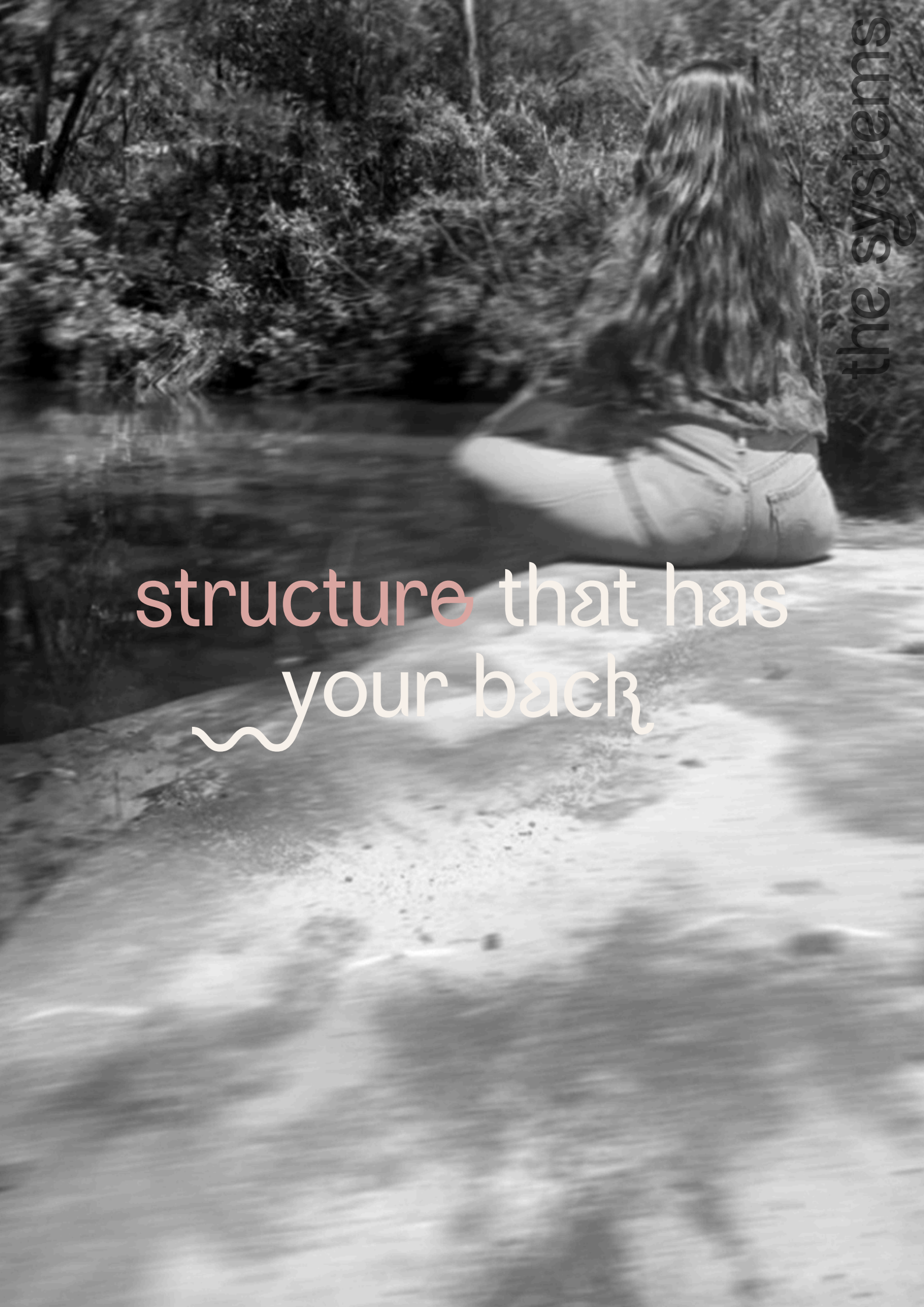


keep the fire
burning

the momentum



*Great things are not done by impulse,
but by a series of small things
brought together.
~ Vincent Van Gogh.*



the systems

structure that has
your back

structure that has your back

You don't need to hustle harder. You need systems.

This chapter isn't about complicating things or giving you more to do, it's about building habits, routines, and workflows that make things *easier*. Starting a business is a lot, and overwhelm can easily set in.

Systems help you spend less time spinning your wheels and more time doing what matters. If everything in your business depends on you being 'on' all the time, it's not a business, it's a burnout plan.

Assuming you're like most of us – a regular person with an already full list of to do's – you *cannot* afford to run on chaos and adrenaline. Remember that you're building a life, not just a brand.

You need systems.

Not fancy ones. Not expensive ones.

Just practical, repeatable, done-for-you rhythms that save time, protect your energy, and make progress inevitable.

What Systems Actually Do

A system isn't necessarily complicated, it's anything that makes a task easier to repeat.

It could be:

- A reusable email template you send every time a customer asks a question.
- A content plan that tells you what to post each week.
- A shipping process that doesn't make you want to scream.
- A simple workflow for creating and launching a product.
- A dedicated album in your phone that you save photographs of all work-related receipts to.

structure that has your back

- Incorporating AI software that automates standardised aspects of your business.
- A weekly management hour where you check your finances, inbox, and priorities.
- A pinned FAQ highlight on Instagram that answers common customer questions.
- A pre-written caption bank you can pull from when you're low on energy or inspiration.
- A saved checkout template that speeds up ordering materials or stock.
- A checklist you run through every time you launch a new offer.
- A scheduling app that automatically handles client bookings and reminders.
- A repeatable onboarding flow for new customers or clients.
- A swipe file of past wins, testimonials, and results you can use in future marketing.
- A calendar block each Friday to plan the following week.
- A Google Drive folder structure that makes it easy to find your files.
- Pre-set design templates in Canva so you're not starting from scratch every time you create a graphic.
- A list of go-to hashtags, keywords, or SEO tags saved in Notes.

Systems will reduce your mental load, which will free you up to focus, create, and keep going.

Start With the Bottlenecks

Ask yourself:

- What drains me the most?
- What takes too long?
- What do I avoid, delay, or constantly forget?
- What elements are the most repetitive?

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That's your starting point.

If you're always scrambling to post content – create a calendar and batch your content once a month.

If you lose time responding to the same questions – create a FAQ page or saved replies.

If meal time is a war zone – prep on Sundays or rotate five go-to dinners, which will free up some time and energy for your business.

Your systems can extend outside of your business too, because you're not just building a business, you're also building *capacity*.

Don't Scale Chaos

If something is confusing, broken, or inconsistent at a small scale, it will only get worse when you grow.

So, slow down enough to fix what's not working before you expand.

Don't Systemise What You Don't Need

Not every process deserves a system.

Don't waste time automating something that doesn't move your business forward.

Instead, focus on:

- What brings in revenue
- What builds trust with your audience
- What saves your future self time and stress
- What will strengthen your businesses

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Let the rest go.

Build One Small System at a Time

1. Pick one repeating task.
2. Write down how you currently do it.
3. Ask: can this be simplified, batched, scheduled, or automated?
4. Set up a way to do this more efficiently going forward.

This could be as basic as a checklist in your Notes app, or it could be a plugin to your website that specialises in the process you're wanting to systemise. There are lots of solutions out there, but don't overcomplicate it unnecessarily – the best option is often the simplest.

The goal isn't perfection. The goal is repeatability.

Make Your Business Work For You

This chapter is about flipping the script. You're not here to build a business that takes everything from you. You're here to build a business that gives you:

- Time back
- Freedom of choice
- Breathing room

So when you hit a rough week (because you will), your business doesn't crumble, it flexes with you.

structure that has your back

Bottom line:

Build systems now so you don't burn out later.

Even the most passion-fuelled business will drain you if it's built on hustle alone. Structure is not the enemy of creativity, it's the thing that lets creativity survive.



*If you really want to do something
you'll find a way.*

If you don't, you'll find an excuse.

~ Jim Rohn.



the tech

lead the machine

lead the machine



AI isn't the bad guy, and it's not cheating.

It's a tool. A powerful one. And when you're short on time, energy, or support, it can be a game changer.

We don't use AI to replace ourselves, we use it to *amplify* what's already ours – our voice, our vision, our value. And we use it to speed things up, with less mental load.

AI works 24/7, for free. It doesn't get sick. It doesn't take holidays. It's smart, it's fast, it's tireless, it's efficient, and it won't take offence when you ask it to redo something. It is an incredibly useful resource, and if you're not using it to your advantage, you're leaving time and energy on the table.

There are countless AI tools out there, but in this chapter we'll focus on ChatGPT. You don't need to be tech-savvy to make ChatGPT work for you. You just need to know what to tell it.

This is how you should start:

Before You Ask: Teach ChatGPT About Your Business

The better you train ChatGPT on your business, the better the results you'll get. Think of it like onboarding a new assistant – you wouldn't throw them into writing content without first explaining who you are, what you sell, and who you help.

So before you start asking for help with copy, content, or planning, give it the full picture.

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The Comprehensive Business Context Prompt

Here's a single prompt that gives ChatGPT what it needs to start generating tailored, high-quality output for you:

"I'm going to give you a full overview of my business so you can better support me. Please remember this context for all future responses.

My business is called: [Business Name]

I sell: [Describe your product(s) or service(s) in 1–2 sentences]

My primary audience is: [Describe who your ideal customer is—demographics, pain points, goals, etc.]

What makes my business different: [What's your unique value, positioning, voice, or mission?]

My tone of voice is: [e.g., warm and empowering / direct and no-fluff / playful and irreverent / professional and polished]

My main marketing channels are: [Instagram, email, website, etc.]

I need help with: [What do you want help with today? e.g. writing a landing page, planning content, naming a product, etc.]"

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Example filled-in version:

My business is called: Maker & Me

I sell: Artisan-made homewares and wellness products that support global craftsmanship and meaningful rituals.

My primary audience is: Women aged 30–50 who care about intentional living, ethical consumption, and beauty with depth. They often feel overstimulated and crave calm, connection, and ritual.

What makes my business different: We're not just a shop – we tell the stories behind each product, connecting our customers to the maker and the meaning. The aesthetic is elevated, earthy, and refined – not boho cliché.

My tone of voice is: Grounded, warm, thoughtful, and direct. But still emotionally resonant.

My main marketing channels are: Instagram, email, and a Shopify-based website.

I need help with: Writing a series of Instagram captions for a new collection launch, and tightening up my homepage copy.

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Kickstart the Blank Page

Whether you're writing a product description, a blog post, or your About page, AI can give you a starting point. Don't overthink the prompt. Try:

Prompt:

"Write a first draft of a product description for [X] that sounds like my brand personality."

Or, *"Can you help me write a one-line description of my business that's clear and compelling?"*

Or *"Here's what I offer – can you suggest a better way to say it for my homepage?"*

But, and this is important, edit it! It's just kickstarting you, remember. You shouldn't be relying on it for your finished creative work.

Batch Your Ideas

Need 50 Instagram post ideas? 30 blog headlines? 20 lead magnet titles? Done. AI is great for generating volume. You pick the gold.

Prompt:

"Give me 20 Instagram Reel hooks for [insert niche] that feel [playful/direct/spiritual/edgy]."

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Then refine it it:

"Now make it spicier."

"Now make it weird."

"Now make it sound like I'm yelling at them, lovingly."

Rinse and repeat until you've got what you need.

Play Editor-in-Chief

Paste your rough draft into AI and say:

Prompt:

"Tighten this up."

"Make it punchier."

"Cut the fluff – more no nonsense."

"Re-write this with my tone."

"Edit this email so it's more persuasive, but still sounds like me".

"Remove any repetitiveness in this text".

It's like having a built-in editor. You're still the writer, and the director.

Turn Longform into Shortform

Wrote a blog post? Great. Turn it into 5 captions, 3 email intros, and 10 Instagram hooks.

Prompt:

"Turn this blog post into 3 Reels captions, 5 Instagram hooks, and 2 newsletter intros."

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(Then paste your content.)

Tick. Repurposing done.

Analyse Your Positioning

Not sure if your messaging is landing? Drop in your Instagram bio, website copy, or sales page and ask:

Prompt:

"What does this bio/website/sales page make you think I sell and who it's for? What tone does it convey?"

"How could I make this clearer, stronger, or more aligned with [my brand personality, values, audience etc]?"

Pair it with a screenshot of your IG bio, or paste in a chunk of text for instant feedback.

Be Your Motivational Coach (For Free, Anytime You Need)

Feeling stuck, spiraling, or procrastinating on repeat? You can literally type:

Prompt:

"Pretend you're my coach. I feel like giving up because [insert reason]. Say something that would snap me out of it."

"Give me a pep talk that's tough love but still kind."

"Talk to me like my future self who's already done the thing."

"Help me get out of my head. I'm spiraling and can't take action."

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It's not a replacement for therapy. But sometimes, it is the reminder you need at 11pm when your brain won't shut up.

Brainstorm Products or Offers (Based on Your Strengths)

Don't know what to sell? You can use AI to reverse-engineer ideas based on your experience, skills, and interests.

Prompt:

"Here's what I'm good at: [X]. Here's who I want to help: [Y]. What kinds of products, services, or offers could I create that solve a real problem for them?"

"What digital products could I make if I want to help [audience] with [problem]?"

What are 10 specific, paid offers someone like me could create and sell online?"

Get Unstuck, Fast

Use AI like a thought partner. Anytime you feel overwhelmed or indecisive:

Prompt:

"I'm stuck between these two ideas: [X] and [Y]. Help me think through the pros and cons of each."

"I'm overthinking this landing page headline. Give me 5 clear and compelling options."

"What's the simplest next step I could take right now toward [goal]?"

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Plan Content and Campaigns

Use ChatGPT as your strategic assistant – build out a 2-week content plan, a launch sequence, or an email flow.

Try asking:

*"Create a 2-week content calendar for promoting my new product."
"What emails should I send before and after launching a new course?"*

Improve Workflow and Systems

You can use AI to create templates, standard operating procedures, checklists, or automated processes. Try asking:

*"Create a step-by-step process for fulfilling online orders."
"Help me write a customer service email template for delayed shipments."*

Learn Faster

Instead of searching endlessly online, use ChatGPT to get quick, simplified answers. Try asking:

*"Explain SEO like I'm five."
"What's the difference between a landing page and a sales page, and when should I use each?"*

Stay Accountable

You can use ChatGPT to help set goals, track habits, or structure your workday. Try asking:

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"Help me create a simple daily routine for building my business in 90 minutes a day."

"Can you give me a checklist for launching a product step-by-step?"

Ground Rules for Using AI in Your Business

- Be clear before you ask. Garbage in, garbage out. Know what you're aiming for. The more specific you are, the better the result.
- Use your own words to refine its output. Don't be lazy.
- Double-check facts and tone. AI isn't always accurate. Or aligned.
- Don't ask it to "be you." YOU be you. Use it to get to you, faster.
- Stay in control. If you start using AI to avoid decision-making, you're doing it wrong.

IP Ownership Rights when using AI in your business

Any content it generates for you is yours to use, including for commercial purposes, and you own the rights to it. It becomes your intellectual property once it is generated for you. You can edit, publish, sell, or distribute it however you like. No attribution to AI source required.

Still unsure? Just ask it yourself.

What AI Can't Do (And Never Will)

- It can't make you brave.
- It can't teach you what your people actually care about.
- It can't hold the vision.
- It can't lead with intuition.
- It can't know your lived experience.

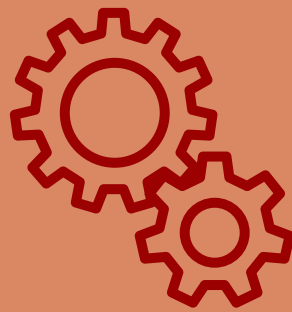
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- It can't decide what's most important to you.
- It can't own your voice, your values, or your originality.
- It can't build relationships.
- It can't care.

Use It. Don't Hide Behind It.

Use it to work smarter. But don't let it replace your thinking. AI can help you move faster and lighten the load. But it won't make decisions, hold the vision, show up for you, or shape your business in the real world.

That's your job.



*I find that the harder I work,
the more luck I seem to have.
~ Thomas Jefferson.*

make your **move**

the launch



make your move

Launching is one of the most thrilling moments in business. It's when your idea finally steps out into the world – where people can see it, respond to it, and become part of it. It's proof you've moved from dreaming to doing, and that's worth celebrating. But alongside the excitement often comes fear.

For many, the biggest barrier to launching isn't the work, it's the fear of being seen. Not by strangers. By them. The people from high school. Your old coworkers. Your ex. The family who never quite got you. The ones who've seen you stumble. The ones who don't know this version of you.

You might picture them scrolling past your first post and sniggering. But the truth is: they probably won't – and even if they do, it says more about them than it does about you.

Or maybe the fear isn't about them at all, maybe it's that your work doesn't feel perfect yet. That if you just had a little more time, you could create a better version.

Whatever the reason, fear can be paralyzing, especially if you're starting something new, starting alone, or still feeling fragile from whatever brought you here.

Launching means putting yourself out there before the proof of your success exists. It's exhilarating, but it can also feel deeply uncomfortable. Start small, focus on the process, and trust that the right people will connect with you in time.

Start with the Story

You can begin sharing even before your product is ready – your words and your story can start building anticipation.

make your move

You can begin before your stock arrives, before your website is live, before your ebook is finished, or before you're ready to offer your service. You can launch with just your words.

Your story can be the bridge that helps people connect with you before they've even seen what you're selling. It builds anticipation, interest, and trust, so when the product is ready, you already have an audience leaning in.

It also helps you practise talking about your work, get comfortable being visible, and attract the people who resonate with your vision.

Make Visibility Feel Safer During Your Launch

If launching still feels terrifying, here are some ways to make visibility feel safer:

- Make a separate account for your brand.
- Block anyone who makes you hesitate. Anyone.
- Use a pseudonym if it helps, let the work speak first.
- Share anonymously in safe spaces to practise being seen.
- Start by posting in niche communities where your audience already gathers.
- Share content without your face or name until you're comfortable.
- Post in Stories first (they disappear after 24 hours) before moving to permanent posts.
- Launch your offer to a small 'beta' group before going fully public.
- Schedule posts ahead so you're not in 'real-time reaction' mode.
- Begin with behind-the-scenes or moodboard posts instead of direct sales pitches.

make your move

You're allowed to launch in a way that feels good for you and protects your creative heart while it's still tender. Being comfortable with visibility is a skill – start small, build confidence, see what resonates, and expand what you share as you go.

Common Launch Mistakes to Avoid

- Waiting until everything is perfect before you start.
- Talking only about features, not the bigger story.
- Going silent if there's no immediate response.
- Posting once and expecting a rush of sales.
- Only talking about your offer instead of showing it in different contexts.

Comprehensive Launch Plan

Before You Start:

You've already defined your audience, your core offer, your brand values, and your key messages in earlier chapters. This plan uses those insights to guide what you share and how.

Phase 1 – Story & Context (1–2 weeks, ~5 posts).

Goal: Introduce your why and vision to start building awareness and connection.

- Post 1: Share your "why" – what called you to this work?
- Post 2: Share your vision using moodboards, quotes, or inspiration – no need for your face yet if you're not ready or it's not going to be part of your brand.
- Post 3: Go behind the scenes – what you're learning or excited about.
- Post 4: Share a personal story or values that drive your business.

make your move

- Post 5: Engage your audience with a poll, question, or invite feedback.

Pacing: About 3 posts per week, spread over 1–2 weeks.

Phase 2 – Building Anticipation & Trust (1–2 weeks, ~6 posts).

Goal: Deepen connection, show your process, and build curiosity about the offer

- Post 1: Show progress on your product/service creation.
- Post 2: Share a small challenge or fear you're working through.
- Post 3: Highlight a core benefit of your offer – what problem does it solve?
- Post 4: Share a testimonial, beta user feedback, or story about how this could help an imagined customer.
- Post 5: Answer common questions or misconceptions.
- Post 6: Invite people to sign up for updates or a waitlist.

Pacing: 3 posts per week, possibly adding Stories daily for lighter engagement.

Phase 3 – Launch Offer & Call to Action (1 week, ~5 posts).

Goal: Present your offer clearly, provide all the details, and invite people to buy or join.

- Post 1: Official launch announcement – what is it, why now?
- Post 2: Break down the offer – what's included, pricing, how to buy.
- Post 3: Share how your offer solves real problems or changes lives.
- Post 4: Overcome objections or FAQs.
- Post 5: Last call/reminder before launch offer closes.

make your move

Pacing: 5 posts across the week, including Stories or Reels for urgency.

Phase 4 – Post-Launch & Relationship Building (1–2 weeks, ~4 posts).

Goal: Support new customers, share early wins, and nurture your community.

- Post 1: Thank you post and welcome new customers.
- Post 2: Share customer testimonials or early results.
- Post 3: Behind-the-scenes look at what's next or improvements coming.
- Post 4: Invite feedback, questions, or future interest.

Pacing: 2–3 posts per week, lighter but consistent to keep momentum.

Total Content Volume:

~20–25 posts over 4–6 weeks, plus daily Stories or lighter engagement posts as you feel comfortable.

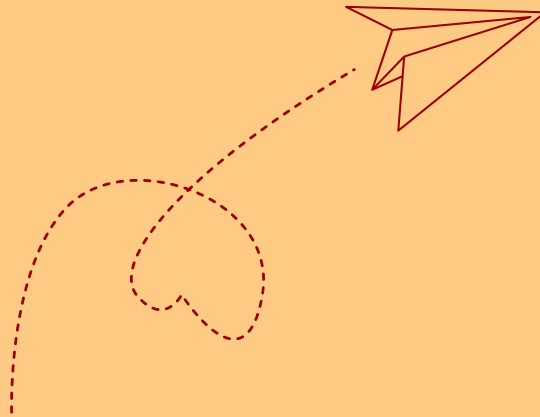
Tips:

- Use scheduling tools to batch-create and plan posts ahead of time.
- Repurpose content across formats (e.g. turn a story post into a Reel or carousel).
- Focus on quality and consistency.
- Repetition is key in a launch. People need to hear your offer multiple times before they act, so share it in different ways throughout your launch window.

make your move

Final takeaway:

Launching isn't about being the loudest or having everything figured out. It's about stepping forward, sharing your story, and making it possible for the right people to find you. It's about building trust through consistency, clarity, and connection. When you show up with purpose and let your offer be seen, you're not just asking for a sale for yourself, you're providing an opportunity for the right people to be genuinely impacted by what you have to offer.



How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

~ Anne Frank.



effortless yes

the sales

effortless yes

All you need to begin selling is a smart setup that lets people discover, click, and pay you, without leaving Instagram – you don't need a full website.

Here's exactly what to use:

Link-in-Bio Platform

Choose a tool that lets people buy your offers *directly* from your profile.

Top Picks:

- [Stan Store](#) (best for digital products, coaching, courses)
 - Sell products, book sessions, collect emails – all from your link in bio.
 - Accepts payments. Clean layout. Mobile-first.
 - Great if you don't have a website yet.
- [Systeme.io](#) (best for funnels, freebies, email capture)
 - Free landing pages, sales pages, and automations.
 - Good for building a basic sales funnel without tech headaches.
- [Koji](#) or [Beacons](#) (quick setup, digital-first)
 - Embed PDFs, downloads, or services.
 - Good if you want plug-and-play tools + tipping features.

Payment + Delivery Tools

No website? No problem. These let you get paid + deliver digital products.

- [Gumroad](#) – Sell PDFs, templates, toolkits, anything digital.
- [Payhip](#) – Similar to Gumroad, with extra options like pay-what-you-want pricing.
- [ThriveCart](#) or [Lemon Squeezy](#) – For more advanced checkouts, upsells, or multiple offers.

effortless yes

Booking Calls or Sessions

If you're offering coaching, strategy, or 1:1 services:

- Calendly – Link to your calendar and let people book + pay in one go.
- TidyCal – One-time purchase alternative to Calendly.
- Acuity – Great for coaches or creatives needing forms, custom fields, or packages.

Tip: Integrate your booking tool with Stan Store or Systeme so your whole process is in one place.

Automate Your Instagram Engagement

When someone comments, DMs, or clicks your Story link, you want to follow up *fast*.

Use automation tools that don't feel robotic.

- ManyChat (Meta-approved)
 - Set auto-DM replies triggered by keywords (e.g. someone comments "ebook" and they instantly get the link).
 - Can send PDFs, links, or start conversations.
 - Helps you grow your list while you sleep.
- MobileMonkey or Chatfuel
 - Similar functionality; good for customer support or lead generation.
 - Check Meta's rules for automation to stay compliant.

Bonus: Email Collection

You want to turn followers into *subscribers* – people you can reach off Instagram.

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- [Flodesk](#) – Beautiful, beginner-friendly.
- [MailerLite](#) – Free and powerful.
- [ConvertKit](#) – Built for creators with products, freebies, and automation.

Connect these tools to your [Stan Store](#) or [Systeme](#) funnels to collect emails during every purchase or opt-in.

Suggested Instagram Sales Flow:

- Post Reel with CTA: "Comment 'START' to get the link."
- Use ManyChat to DM link instantly.
- Link sends them to your Stan Store or Systeme page.
- Buyer pays or signs up.
- You capture email + deliver value immediately.
- You follow up via email or Instagram DM (manually or automated).

Try This:

Set a timer. Give yourself 1 hour.

- Set up your link-in-bio (Stan, Systeme, or Beacons)
- Add your offer (digital product, coaching, freebie – whatever's ready)
- Use ManyChat to automate one DM keyword
- Share your first CTA Reel or Story

You just built a no-website-needed sales system.

Reels Content You Can Make on Repeat

Here's a few high-performing formats you can rotate:

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- "Here's what I wish I knew..." – Tell the truth about your journey
- Mini tutorials – Quick tips or how-tos related to your product, mindset, or niche
- Before & after / process videos – Show progress, transformation, or making-of
- "Day in the life" as an entrepreneur – Normalise the juggle
- Story snippets – One powerful lesson you've learned, shared straight to camera

The key is: keep it short, specific, and personal.

effortless yes



Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential.

~ John Maxwell.



protect the maker

the boundaries

protect the maker



If you burn out, your business burns with you.

This isn't just about mindset, it's about your wellbeing and the survival of your creation. Your time, attention, and emotional bandwidth are finite. If your business drains you, it can't sustain you.

This chapter is about creating boundaries, spotting burnout early, and staying focused on what matters. It's about protecting the most important asset: you. Because you don't just want a business, you want a life. And the two must work together.

Energy Is a Currency — Spend It on What Matters

Ask yourself:

- Who or what drains me?
- Who or what energises me?
- What patterns or habits am I keeping out of guilt, fear, or obligation?

You're not just managing time – you're managing *capacity*.

Protecting your energy may mean disappointing people who are used to your self-abandonment. And that's okay.

Boundaries That Protect Your Business and Yourself

Time Boundaries

- Set clear work hours, however short
- Use "Do Not Disturb" on your phone while you create
- Say no to requests that don't serve your mission

protect the maker



Mind Boundaries

- Limit the consumption of other people's content; comparison steals focus
- Don't download every course or sign up for every webinar
- Stay focused on your next step, not someone else's highlight reel

Emotional Boundaries

- You don't need to explain your entire life to justify your choices
- You don't owe anyone access to your energy just because they expect it
- Protect your peace without apologising

Burnout Isn't Always Obvious

Sometimes it looks like:

- Decision fatigue
- Procrastinating about important tasks
- Endless scrolling disguised as "research"
- Fantasising about quitting because it feels easier than failing

If any of that hits, you're not broken, you're just exhausted.
And when you're tired, your job isn't to push harder. It's to reset.

What Happens Without Boundaries

Without boundaries, you'll say yes to the wrong things, burn out on busy work, and start resenting the very business you once felt lit up by. Resentment will grow quietly, until one day you realise you're running a business you want to escape from.

protect the maker



Simple Practices to Protect Your Energy

Define your 'enough' each day.

Whether that's:

- 2 hours of focused work
- Completing one key blog post or sales email
- Serving 3 clients well
- Hitting a clear milestone

Don't overload your list – overcommitment drains confidence. You can always adjust your expectations as you learn what's truly manageable.

Batch, Plan, and Protect Your Creative Flow

- Protect peak creative hours; set a specific time block and clear outcomes ("record 3 Reels," "write 5 captions").
- Plan and schedule when each piece of content will go live. Use a calendar or scheduling tool to map out posts, emails, or videos in advance.

Batching gives you content to draw from later, so you're not relying on inspiration or urgency to fuel your output when creativity may not be flowing.

Planning and scheduling is about ensuring your content rolls out at the right times to stay consistent, even when you're busy. This keeps your visibility consistent without draining your day-to-day energy.

protect the maker



Set Communication Boundaries

- Check emails, DMs, and comments at specific times, then close the tab.
- You're not on-call – constant access kills focus and creates invisible energy leaks.

Block the Critics

- If someone questions, criticises, or chips away at your confidence without curiosity or respect – mute, block, or move on. They're not your audience. There's no upside to giving access to anyone who drains your energy or distracts you from your path.

Say No With a Full Stop

- Protecting your time and energy is a complete sentence – "I'm not available for that right now."

Choose Recovery Over Guilt

- Rest isn't a reward, it's a requirement for sustainability.
- Build in downtime, and defend it non-negotiably.

Protect Your Inputs

- Limit advice, inspiration, and content consumption that creates pressure, comparison, or distraction.

Use Focus Tools

- Apps like Opal, Freedom, or One Sec can block distractions and reduce compulsive scrolling.

protect the maker



Create a "Done-for-Now" List

- Each morning, define 3–5 high-impact tasks that move the needle. Once complete, you're done for the day. Everything else is optional.

Bookend Your Workday

- Set clear start and end times for work, even if the window is small. This signals when it's time to switch off.

You Can't Be Everything, Everywhere, All At Once

Burnout doesn't just hurt you, it makes your business brittle. The businesses that last aren't powered by nonstop effort. They run on a rhythm of focus and rest, with space to recalibrate without guilt.

Action:

Audit your current commitments. What's one boundary you can set this week that gives you more mental, emotional, or creative capacity?



protect the maker



the boundaries



*Take a rest;
a field that has rested
gives a beautiful crop.
~ Ovid.*

the checks

pause, review, refine



pause, review, refine

Building your business isn't a 'set it and forget it' exercise. Businesses evolve constantly – customers change, trends shift, and what worked last month may not work next month. The only way to stay on top is to check in regularly, analyse what's happening, and make decisions based on evidence, not guesswork. This chapter shows you how to systematically review every critical area of your business, and at the end, you'll find a checklist that condenses this information into a simple, actionable tool, so you can stay on track without feeling overwhelmed.

Set a Check-In Rhythm

Consistency matters more than frequency. Decide how often you'll review different areas. Here are some suggestions:

- Daily: Quick revenue or sales check, top-priority task progress.
- Weekly: Marketing performance, social engagement, customer feedback.
- Monthly: Financial statements, product performance, email metrics, ad campaigns.
- Quarterly: Overall business health, goal alignment, strategic adjustments.

Use a simple system – Google Sheets, Notion, or a business dashboard, to track metrics over time. This creates visibility and accountability.

Sales & Revenue

Why it matters:

Sales tell you whether your offer is actually working. Numbers don't lie.

pause, review, refine

What to track:

- Total revenue per product/service.
- Number of sales per offer.
- Conversion rates (website visits → purchases, lead magnets → email subscribers → buyers).

How to act:

- Identify products that aren't selling, consider tweaks, bundling, or discontinuation.
- Spot your best performers and explore ways to scale them.
- Check for seasonal patterns or external factors affecting sales.

Marketing Performance

Why it matters:

Marketing tells you whether the world is noticing your business.

What to track:

- Social media: engagement rates, follower growth, reach, top-performing posts.
- Email marketing: open rates, click-through rates, unsubscribes.
- Paid ads: cost per click (CPC), cost per acquisition (CPA), return on ad spend (ROAS).

How to act:

- Double down on channels that bring the highest ROI.
- Pause or adjust campaigns that underperform.
- Experiment strategically – small tests, then scale winners.

pause, review, refine

Customer Feedback

Why it matters:

Customers are the ultimate measure of success. Ignoring them is like flying blind.

What to track:

- Direct feedback: surveys, emails, reviews, testimonials.
- Indirect feedback: refund requests, abandoned carts, social mentions.
- Repeat purchases: indicates satisfaction and loyalty.

How to act:

- Solve recurring complaints immediately.
- Use positive feedback to highlight your strengths in marketing.
- Consider new product ideas or improvements based on customer requests.

Operations & Workflow

Why it matters:

A smooth operation keeps you productive and reduces stress.

What to track:

- Fulfilment speed and accuracy.
- Inventory levels and supply chain reliability.
- Efficiency of your workflows – are you spending time on high-value tasks?

pause, review, refine

How to act:

- Streamline or automate repetitive tasks.
- Address bottlenecks immediately – small inefficiencies compound quickly.
- Document processes so they're repeatable and scalable.

Financial Health

Why it matters:

Cash flow is the lifeblood of your business, and profit determines whether your business is truly sustainable and growing.

What to track:

- Revenue vs. expenses.
- Profit margins per product or service (your profit %).
- Outstanding invoices and upcoming bills.

How to act:

- Cut unnecessary costs without sacrificing quality.
- Review your profit margins: if they're below your target %, consider adjusting pricing, reducing costs, or optimising your product mix.
- Forecast cash flow for at least 3 months to prevent surprises.

Content & Audience Engagement

Why it matters:

Your audience is your future revenue. Staying connected ensures relevance.

pause, review, refine

What to track:

- Engagement: likes, comments, shares, saves.
- Reach and impressions: how many people see your content.
- Growth: new followers, subscribers, newsletter sign-ups.

How to act:

- Replicate content that resonates; discard what falls flat.
- Test different formats: videos, reels, carousel posts, stories.
- Keep your messaging consistent and aligned with your audience's needs.

Reflection & Decisions

Checking in isn't just about gathering data, it's about using it to make decisions.

Ask yourself:

- What worked this period? How can I scale it?
- What didn't work? Can I tweak, test, or stop it?
- Where am I wasting resources? Can I redirect them?
- Are my goals still realistic and aligned with my vision?

Document these reflections and create an action plan for the next period. Even a 15–30 minute review session weekly can keep you proactive rather than reactive.

pause, review, refine

Key Takeaways

- Check-ins are not optional, they're crucial.
- Track metrics, feedback, and operations systematically.
- Make evidence-based decisions and take immediate action.
- Keep your system simple but consistent, visibility is everything.

Remember:

Business is a cycle of action, reflection, and adjustment. The faster you close that loop, the stronger your business becomes.



pause, review, refine

Business Check-In Checklist

Weekly Check-In (Approx. 30–60 minutes)

1. Sales & Revenue

- Review total sales and revenue for the week.
- Identify best-selling products/services.
- Note any products with no or low sales.
- Check conversion rates on website, lead magnets, or ads.

2. Marketing & Content

- Review top 3 performing social posts (likes, shares, comments).
- Check email metrics: open rate, click-throughs, unsubscribes.
- Evaluate ad campaigns: CPC, CPA, ROAS.
- Identify content that didn't perform; plan improvements.

3. Customer Feedback

- Read new reviews, testimonials, and survey responses.
- Note any recurring complaints or issues.
- Track repeat purchases or loyal customers.

4. Operations & Workflow

- Check order fulfillment speed and accuracy.
- Note any workflow bottlenecks or delays.
- Identify tasks that can be automated or delegated.

pause, review, refine

5. Quick Financial Snapshot

- Track revenue vs. expenses for the week.
- Check outstanding invoices or payments.
- Note anything unusual in cash flow.

6. Reflection & Action

- What worked this week? Plan to scale it.
- What didn't work? Decide: tweak, test, or stop.
- Are there any quick wins to improve efficiency or revenue?



pause, review, refine

Monthly Check-In (Approx. 1–2 hours)

1. Sales & Revenue

- Review monthly sales per product/service.
- Compare to previous month, identify growth or decline.
- Review conversion rates across all funnels.

2. Marketing & Audience

- Track social media growth and engagement trends.
- Review email list growth and performance.
- Evaluate effectiveness of ad campaigns and ROI.
- Plan content strategy adjustments based on data.

3. Customer Insights

- Analyse all feedback, complaints, and testimonials.
- Identify patterns in customer needs or requests.
- Consider new products, services or improvements based on trends.

4. Operations & Workflow

- Assess supply chain and inventory levels.
- Check fulfilment speed and efficiency.
- Identify bottlenecks or repetitive tasks to automate.

pause, review, refine

5. Financial Health

- Review full income statement: revenue, expenses, profit.
- Calculate profit margins per product/service.
- Forecast cash flow for the next month.

6. Strategic Reflection

- Are goals still realistic and aligned with vision?
- What should be scaled, stopped, or tested next month?
- Create a concrete action plan with 3–5 priorities for next month.

Tips for Maximum Impact

- Keep a single dashboard or document for all metrics – visibility is power.
- Use numbers, not feelings, to make decisions.
- Treat check-ins like non-negotiable appointments with your business.
- Small, consistent adjustments compound faster than rare big overhauls.



pause, review,
refine

the checks



*Always bear in mind that your own resolution
to success is more important than
any other one thing.
~ Abraham Lincoln.*



keep showing up

the persistence

keep showing up

Let's be honest: some days this will feel like it's not working. The whole thing will feel like a mistake.

You'll doubt yourself. You'll compare yourself. You'll wonder if it's worth it.

You'll wonder if you're wasting your time.

You'll question your instincts, your ideas, your abilities.

You'll look at people who seem 10 steps ahead and think, "What's the point?"

That's not failure. That's the work.

This chapter is your reminder to keep going anyway.

To be seen when you've been taught to shrink.

To take up space even when you're unsure.

To trust that the way forward is through, and that doing it imperfectly is still doing it right.

Trust that consistency pays off.

This chapter is for *those* days.

The ones where the doubts are louder than your drive.

Where you've posted, planned, created—and nothing seems to land.

Where the bills are still there, the kids are still hungry, and the business feels far away from where you want it to be.

Here's the truth:

All of that is normal.

And none of it means you're failing.

keep showing up



This Is the Time Most People Quit

They don't quit because they're not talented.
They quit because they expected the path to feel easier.
They expected momentum to come faster.
They expected a breakthrough after the first 10 posts, or the first product launch, or the first client pitch.

But as we know, momentum isn't built on spurts of *motivation*, it's built on *gritty, repetitive action*.

You're Allowed to Feel It AND Keep Moving

It's okay to feel discouraged.
It's okay to cry, to rage, to doubt, to feel like an imposter, to feel deflated, to want to quit.

What matters is what you do *next*.

Resilience doesn't mean pretending everything's fine.
It means feeling the hard things, and not letting them make your decisions for you.

This is Not the End, It's the Dip

The dip is that weird, murky middle part.
You're not new anymore, but you're not "there" yet either.

This is where businesses either die quietly, or strengthen and rise.

keep showing up



You don't need a miracle.
You need to keep showing up.

One offer.
One post.
One sale.
One day at a time.

Things That Feel Like Failure (But Aren't)

- A launch that flops
- A post that gets 3 likes
- Getting ghosted after a discovery call
- Doubting your offer
- Changing direction
- Taking a break to breathe

All of it is *data*. All of it is *normal*. All of it can be fuel, *if you keep going*.

Take Up Space (Without Apology)

You've already done the hardest part: starting.

Now your job is to *take up space*.

To keep backing yourself, even when it feels awkward.
To build belief through action, don't wait for the confidence to land first.

Remember that confidence isn't a prerequisite, it's a *byproduct*. You're building it every time you show up. Every time you hit publish. Every time you make a sale or book a client. Every time you choose to show up, and not to give up.

keep showing up



the persistence

Final Truth: You're Closer Than You Think

Success rarely comes as a tidal wave.


It shows up as a trickle: a comment here, a DM there, a sale from someone who's been quietly watching you for months.

You don't get to choose the timing.

But you *do* choose whether you're still standing when it arrives.

So keep building, keep believing, and keep going. Even when it's not glamorous, even when it's uncomfortable, even when it sucks.

Because the life you're building is possible, and it's waiting for you to meet it.



keep showing up



the persistence

Remember, it isn't the dreamers
who have good lives ~ it's the doers.
Remember also what I call
the three P's of success:
Passion, Planning and Perseverance.
~ Homer Hickam.

the failures

fail fast, learn faster



fail fast, learn faster

Let go of what's not working, quickly, cleanly, and without shame.

One of the most powerful things you can learn as a business owner?
Not everything is worth saving.

Sometimes, a product flops.

Sometimes, a collaboration feels off.

Sometimes, your 'great idea' doesn't land.

Sometimes, the Instagram posts you were sure would hit... don't.

And that's okay.

This chapter is about learning to stop pouring energy into things that aren't serving you, or your business.

Failure Isn't Fatal. But Dragging It Out Might Be.

It's not the failed product or the dead-end strategy that drains you.
It's the *refusal to let it go*.

You don't need to wait for everything to crash and burn to call it.
If something's sucking your time, your energy, your enthusiasm, *pay attention*.

If it's not working after repeated effort, feedback, and adjustments, it's okay to pivot.

Don't confuse persistence with stubbornness. Refine your ability to be discerning.

fail fast, learn faster

the failures

Things It's Okay to Let Go Of

- A product range that isn't selling (no matter how much you love it)
- A supplier who's unreliable or difficult
- A shipping service that's costing you more in refunds than in reach
- A content format or pillar that's not resonating
- A process that feels heavy every time you touch it
- A platform that doesn't align with how you like to create
- A client who drains your energy, disrespects boundaries, or just isn't the right fit
- A service that no longer feels aligned, even though you think it 'makes sense'.

Let it go. Test something new. Move on quickly.

Failing Fast Doesn't Mean Rushing, It Means Recognising

This isn't about throwing in the towel after one rough week. It's about using data, instinct, and feedback to course correct with confidence.

Ask yourself:

- Have I given this a fair shot?
- Have I tried refining or adjusting it?
- Do I still believe in this direction, or am I just scared to quit?

If it's no longer aligned, useful, or viable, it's not a failure – it's feedback. And smart businesses move on fast when the signs are clear.

fail fast, learn faster

the failures

The Cost of Hanging On Too Long

- Lost time
- Lost energy
- Lost momentum
- Diminished self-trust
- Erosion of customer trust when your offers, service, or presence becomes inconsistent

You can rebuild money.

You can rebuild reach.

But your time and energy? That's sacred. Spend it wisely.

Know When to Double Down vs. When to Ditch

Some things need more time. Others need a quick, clean exit.

Learn the difference, and trust yourself to act on it.

You're not flaky for changing direction.

You're not a failure for cutting your losses.

You're strategic. You're adapting. You're building with your eyes open.

Fail Fast = Free Yourself

Letting go of the wrong thing makes space for the right thing to find you.

So be ruthless with what's draining you.

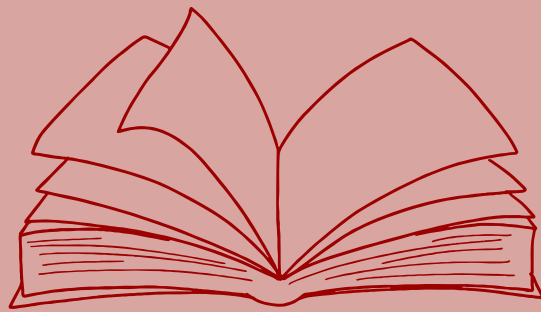
Be generous with your next try.

And keep moving forward with less baggage every time.

Because failure isn't the opposite of success, it's how you get there faster.

fail fast, learn
faster

the failures



*Failure is success in progress.
~ Albert Einstein.*



you're making it!

the closing

you're making it!



You've made it.

Not to the end of the road, because there isn't one, but to the end of the starting line.

You now know how to shape an idea, understand your audience, set up a business, and craft an offer that sells. You've learned how to brand with intention, price for profit, adopt sustainable practices, make decisions faster, and adapt when something isn't working.

This book has been about giving you the tools and clarity to move. And now? You're moving.

But, just so you're not under any illusions – businesses don't get 'finished.' There's no magic point where the uncertainty disappears and the work is done. Instead, as you keep going, you build resilience, refine your instincts, and start making moves faster, more confidently, and with clearer purpose. You don't wait for certainty and instead build it through action.

Everything you've read here only matters if you act on it. Your first launch, your first sale, your first customer – they're all waiting. Each step will teach you more than standing still ever could. Because even imperfect action builds momentum, and momentum is the vehicle that will carry you to the future you want.

So, go on your way, back yourself, stop over-preparing, treat every step like progress, and let the small wins stack until they become big ones.

You don't have to 'feel ready.' You don't have to have it all figured out. You're already doing it. Right now.

Close this book knowing you've turned possibility into reality. You've shifted from thinking about building something to actually building it.

you're making it!



That's why this book is called *The Art of the Start*, because art is exactly this; taking what you have – your skills, your ideas, your determination – and turning them into something real, something that others can appreciate. It's a personal journey, an expression of who you are, what you envision, what you value, and what you believe is worth putting out into the world. It's your ability to make impact through your creative expression. And no one else can do it quite like you.

So, keep going. You've got everything you need.

Not just to build the business. To build the life. The one that's fully, unapologetically yours. The business is one thread in that – an important one, a meaningful one – but remember it was never really the point. It's the vehicle. And now you're driving.

The next chapter isn't mine to write, it's yours.

With love and admiration,

Sophie x

you're making it!

the closing



*There is only one success ~
to be able to spend your life
in your own way.*

~ Christopher Morley.

thank you, crew



Mum and Dad, the lengths you go to support me are boundless. Thank you for believing in me and propping me up while I re-establish myself. You've given me a huge gift – the freedom to go at my own pace, without pressure, and always with encouragement, patience, kindness, and interest. I'm deeply grateful for everything you do

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Love Love Love Love Love