

Transcription

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Welcome to "Beyond the Mirror" with your hosts Adrienne Varga and Jodie Fielden. In this podcast, Adrienne and Jodie take you on an intriguing journey beyond the surface, deep diving into the world of business in the hair, skin, beauty, and wellness industries. From business success tips and marketing hacks to industry insights and trends, it's all here. They leave no stone unturned. So get ready to unlock your full potential, evaluate your business, leave behind the limitations, and embrace the endless possibilities that lie beyond the mirror.

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Welcome, everyone. How much fun was that intro? We're super excited to be here. I'm Jodie Field, and I'm with my work wife, bestie, and business partner, Adrienne Varga. We're here to help you turn your challenges into opportunities, overcome obstacles, and discover practical strategies to create success.

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That's right. And hi, guys. My name is Adrienne Varga, and today we are extremely excited because this is our very first podcast. Today, we're basically going to introduce ourselves properly, share with you who we are and what we do, and we will cover a bit of what you can expect from this podcast in the future. Yeah.

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So we're going to share our personal stories, and we're going to speak more about how we overcame challenges and learned to embrace change, even when it was unexpected and often uninvited, and the importance of seeking help when you need it. Yes, absolutely. But before we start getting into the nitty-gritty, why don't we start with the very beginning, 13 years ago when we first met? I know this is a fun story. I'm going to let Adrienne start because she's better at this bit than me.

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That's all right. So, 13 years ago, when we first started, I was in a really strange situation because the salon where I was working decided to shut down, but they didn't let us know. So basically, one day they just came and told us, "Two weeks from now, we're going to shut the salon. Off you go." It was pretty much like that.

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And obviously, none of us knew what to do. It was such a poor business practice. So we ended up really having two weeks to figure out what we were going to do. For me, my first thought was, "Well, the salon is shutting down. There are going to be so many clients wanting to connect with us or want to follow us," and I just decided, "You know what? Those clients are going to find me anyway, so why don't I just look to rent a chair instead of taking all those clients with me to another business and being an employee again?"

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And this is how I was a little bit delusional because I thought everyone would be open to my idea. I walked into the salon, introduced myself, and asked about renting a chair. I went around the area, and I think I spent almost three days going into every single salon, strategically leaving my little notes for the salon owner when I couldn't speak to them. No

one called me back. And I was like, "Far out, what's going to happen?" So my last thought was, "Well, I just told the universe, 'If it's meant to be, you must help me.'" And this is when I got an idea.

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I used to use Gumtree, where we always posted whatever we wanted to sell or find, and I posted exactly what I was looking for. Five minutes later, I got a response. I initially thought it was from you, but then you clarified that it was actually from Graeme. It was Graeme who responded first, right? The funny thing about your salon was that it was a mere five-minute walk from where I lived. I hadn't even considered your salon. I actually took the bus to other suburbs to find a salon to work in.

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This is where our story began. You invited me to the salon. You lived upstairs and told me to come by anytime since you'd be around. When I visited the salon, we instantly clicked. You were so warm and friendly; it felt like a deep connection. It was as if I had met a long-lost sister because of how lovely you were.

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I still remember Harper sitting in the high chair.

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Yes, she greeted me with a big smile. We began chatting, and we decided right then and there that I would rent two chairs from you and could start immediately. That's how our journey began. I believe our audience can relate, especially as a salon owner, because it was all so unexpected for you. When I arrived at the salon, nothing was planned. At that time, you were still adjusting to having a baby.

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She was only, I think, not even three months old. What happened was that after having the baby, I didn't have anyone to care for her. I had assumed I'd manage everything and take some time off since I had a sizable team back then. But suddenly, one of the girls broke her ankle.

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The day I went into labour, she was playing netball and suffered a severe ankle break. She had to take off for about three months. Then another team member, one of the girls on an Irish visa, decided to leave. All of a sudden, I lost several key team members, and I found myself having to return to work and juggle everything.

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I used to take Harper and bring her to Joe. Do you remember him? He later became her godfather. I'd express milk, grab the baby, and rush her three shops up to Joe's, and he'd watch her for an hour or two so I could work.

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It was chaotic because we were a large salon, and I had about 13 people working for me. It became overwhelming. This was one of those times when I didn't know where to turn for

help. I'm a big-picture thinker, so details often escape me. That's why things were so chaotic. Graeme suggested that since the salon was so spacious, we might consider renting out a chair, as the previous owner used to do. I had inherited one renter, whom I still adore. So Graeme thought, why not add another?

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It would ease some pressure. He mentioned someone had messaged about it, and I agreed. It was just an idea he'd thrown out, but when you came in, it felt right.

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There was an immediate connection, and everything just fell into place, didn't it? Absolutely. The other girl who was renting a chair was also fantastic.

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When I visited your salon, I sensed some disarray, likely due to the new baby. The staff tried to help, but everyone had their own approach. All the systems were in your head, and you were always hands-on, directing everything. When you weren't there, things didn't go your way, which frustrated you.

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The amusing part is, just two weeks after I started, you announced, "Guess what? I'm pregnant again!" I was taken aback.

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With Harper being so young, it was a surprise. You were in a bit of a panic and even suggested I manage the salon. I was hesitant, thinking, "I've just started renting a chair. My life is chaotic right now. I'm not ready for management." We toyed with the idea for a while.

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We considered various arrangements, like me overseeing things in your absence, ensuring nothing went wrong. A few months later, I committed to helping run the business.

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But there's a difference between running and owning a business. We never clearly defined our expectations, so many things just happened spontaneously rather than being planned out.

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The baby hormones were really tough on me, weren't they? Yes, you were extremely emotional. I noticed that. Sometimes the girls in the salon would be taken aback because of the hormones and everything; it was a bit chaotic.

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I think the only help you had was me. Gaye, with her young children, couldn't assist you. My partner was overseas, so I was alone with just my dog. I was basically the second or third best choice.

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That's how we ended up with me managing the salon for almost three years. But during those years, you tried to sell the salon to me multiple times. I remember. When Brynn was about 18 months old, I received two diagnoses.

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Harper was diagnosed as autistic, and Brynn was diagnosed as severely autistic and nonverbal. It was overwhelming receiving all this information. I reached a point where I felt I couldn't handle it anymore. I needed to focus on my family.

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I thought about selling the business. But then, things would start improving, and I'd regain my confidence. We went through this rollercoaster for a long time.

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It must've been around 18 months. When I finally decided to sell, the business started to improve. You asked for six months to rebuild it. At one point, when I was emotionally at my lowest with the kids and everything, and without any family support here, I was struggling financially. Sometimes, Graeme had to pitch in to cover expenses. But once the kids started daycare, I could return to work and rebuild the business.

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Being present and working directly with clients helped. The business started to generate enough to pay me a wage. It became an asset again. I rebuilt it to a point where I felt comfortable selling it to you.

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I remember the day I decided to sell. I told you, "Either you buy it, or I close the doors." Thankfully, things worked out, and you took over. It was a win-win for me. I had my rental clientele to cover my wages.

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We discussed the arrangement extensively. I remember how adamant I was about not wanting to own a salon. But after moving upstairs, I felt more connected to the salon. I began to consider the challenges of finding another place to rent a chair.

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Would another salon offer the same flexibility you did? You were an ideal landlord, giving us so much freedom and trust.

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We were trustworthy. Gaye and I would never take advantage. I began to weigh the pros and cons of moving clients again. I decided to review the business data to see if I could make it work.

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After consulting with my accountant, I decided to take over the salon. The first three months were challenging. I had no strategy or plan. You tried to help, but you were also transitioning out.

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My initial strategy was to work extra hours to cover costs. After a few months, I realised I needed to make it work. I was in my forties.

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I never wanted a salon of my own. I didn't have a decade to figure things out. I wanted both money and a lifestyle. Renting a chair gave me a lifestyle, but it lacked security.

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If I fell sick or went on holiday, no income was generated. I realised this later when my salon became successful. I reduced my hours, working only one Saturday a month, and the business still generated more income than when I was working 60 hours a week. That's when I decided I needed help.

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Yes, I realised I needed help, someone who could guide me in the right direction. That's when I began my research, talked to various people, and eventually found my first business mentor. That decision was a game-changer for me.

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I think it's crucial for people to understand that recognizing a problem is one thing, but finding a solution is another. You were smart to seek out the right guidance. For me, I felt I knew how to run a business, make money, and manage employees. What I didn't realise was that I needed someone to help me organise my thoughts and break down my big ideas into actionable steps.

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I had this epiphany that seeking help wasn't a reflection of my capabilities. I was resistant to external input because I felt confident in my abilities. I didn't want to admit that there was room for improvement.

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We're all skilled in our respective fields, whether it's hairdressing, beauty, or running a Pilates studio. But when it comes to business, that expertise is only half the battle. We're never taught the business skills we need to complement our trade skills.

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With my diverse background, not just in hairdressing but also in HR, software development, and even as a director for an export-import company, I had a unique perspective. My challenge was merging my logical thinking with creativity. I had to find a solution to my current predicament, and after a few months of adjustments, I began to see positive changes in the salon.

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Once things started improving, I genuinely began to enjoy owning and running my salon. Having clarity and control over my business was empowering. Fast forward six years, I sold

the salon. During those years, so much happened between Jody and me. We took separate paths for a while, focusing on our individual challenges.

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Eighteen months into my coaching, I was offered a franchise opportunity. It was a pivotal moment, but doubts plagued me. Could I afford it? Was I good enough? But after discussing it with my mentor, we found a way to make it work.

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When Jodie and I reconnected, she became my assistant, helping with various tasks. It was a relief to have someone knowledgeable by my side, especially someone familiar with the industry.

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The franchise was primarily focused on hair and beauty. After a while, I decided to explore other avenues, leading me to sell the franchise. My strength lies in mindset coaching, being an NLP practitioner. Jodie, with her big-picture thinking, and I shared passions not just for beauty but also for health.

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We delved into the Pilates and yoga industries and noticed striking similarities with the beauty sector. Both industries face challenges like client acquisition, staff training, and time management.

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One significant parallel is how both industries are image-driven. There's an unspoken pressure to maintain a certain image, which can be daunting for many.

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Many professionals in these industries tend to focus on the success stories, often getting caught up in the allure of the "shiny objects." There's an underlying issue in both the beauty and wellness sectors where owners prioritise their business image, often overlooking the foundational aspects that truly matter.

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However, what often happens is that they struggle with the basics and the fundamentals. Many business owners we've spoken to lack clarity and direction. They're trying to keep up with the competition, aren't they?

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Absolutely. That's a prevalent issue in our industry. This is where our podcast, "Beyond the Mirror," comes into play. We'll discuss our expertise in areas like marketing, finance, mindset, team motivation, and more. We'll also introduce industry leaders and successful business owners who have mastered the art of running a thriving business.

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I'm eager to hear their stories and insights. Our listeners can gain valuable knowledge to apply to their own businesses. It's essential to understand the full journey of running a business.

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Success doesn't happen overnight. It involves sleepless nights, endless planning, and perseverance. Many attribute success to luck or being in the right place at the right time. But from our experience working with numerous business owners, we know it's a journey. It's okay to feel uncertain or overwhelmed at times. It's part of the process.

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People often overlook the years of hard work that lead to that "overnight success." They don't see the struggles and challenges faced along the way.

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This ties into our topic for next week: the emphasis on image over fundamentals. Many business owners prioritise appearances over establishing a solid foundation. They invest heavily in aesthetics without first ensuring their business is financially stable.

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Exactly. Many dive headfirst into their ventures without proper planning. They end up spending more than they can afford, trying to keep up with industry standards.

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When I took over the business, I prioritised generating revenue before making significant investments. Starting small and gradually building up is a more sustainable approach.

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It's about ensuring that all the effort and worry culminate in a successful outcome. Many business owners lack a proper business plan, often only creating one when required by a bank. And even then, it's just to tick boxes.

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Our time is almost up, but we hope our listeners have gotten to know us better. From the next episode, we'll focus more on providing valuable business insights.

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We're grateful for our listeners' support. Our journey has been incredible, and we're excited to share our knowledge with you all.

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Our bond has only grown stronger over the years. Even after periods of separation, our connection remains unbreakable. I'm grateful to have found a business partner in Jody.

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It's essential to have clarity and mutual respect in a partnership. We complement each other well, with our contrasting personalities and strengths.

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Indeed, our differences make our partnership more robust. Time has flown by, and we're nearing the end of this episode.

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We invite our listeners to check out our website and social media for more resources and insights.

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Our website offers various resources, workshops, and courses. We're passionate about helping others succeed in their businesses.

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For some fun, you can also take our business personality quiz on our website. It provides a personalised report and video feedback.

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We'll be back next Thursday at 09:30 a.m. Sydney time. Our goal is to help you overcome challenges and discover practical strategies for success.

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Until then, take care and have a great week!

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Thank you for joining us on "Beyond the Mirror." We hope to see you next week as we continue to explore the world of business. If you have any questions or would like to be a guest on our podcast, please reach out to us. Remember, success is always within reach, beyond the mirror.