

Lindy Chaffin Start | Mom, Entrepreneur, Author, Coach, Chief Cook and Bottle Washer



MASTERING MOMPREENEURSHIP

"Change is a natural byproduct of movement, and it's the only true constant in life."

~ Lindy Chaffin Start

If you're a Mompreneur, or thinking of becoming one, you probably have an insatiable appetite for innovation, a unique idea, product or service, and a vision for change in the world. However, what comes with entrepreneurship is a road of ambiguity, risk, and often setbacks. The obstacles to the road of success are in no way unique, nor unconquerable. With a tenacious spirit and the right information, you can overcome the most common pitfalls including finding important enough reasons, unrealistic expectations, an unsupportive environment, or worse, your own fear.

Let's look at the three phases of Mompreneurship, each of their unique contributions and setbacks, and how to maneuver them.

If you're reading this thinking, *"There is no way I will ever be an entrepreneur. There's not enough time in the day. I don't have enough money. I don't have the support. My friends and family will think I'm crazy. I'm scared,"* well, that's just plain old BS and I'm calling you on it right now.

Before I launch into the phases, let me tell you that everything I share here comes from my own personal life experience. I am a real-life entrepreneur who has grown from a freelance graphic designer, to a boutique advertising agency with limited offerings, to national agency with multi-channel offerings specifically for small business in just under four years. I am a mom. My daughter and I have been on our own since she was three, she's 12 now and I couldn't be prouder of the woman she's becoming, but it's not been without its challenges. And, I'm single. I have no partner, no husband, no boyfriend, and haven't since 2010. I have done all of this on my own without a second income for support, without someone to help with chores, or care for my daughter. I was also caregiver to both of my parents until their deaths in 2012 and 2014 respectively, and spent a great deal of time juggling work, raising a daughter, and splitting my time on the stretch of road between Macon and Atlanta, Georgia and sitting in hospitals or hospice.

So, find a prayer box, exercise those demon excuses onto paper, and lock them away. If I can do this, you can do this.

Let's GO! Straight to Phase 1, there's more to life than this.



PHASE 1

**THERE'S MORE
TO LIFE**

If you've been working the typical 9 to 5, climbing the career ladder to that ever so challenging glass ceiling to obtain the American dream all while trying to have babies, juggle sports and after school activities, serve on the PTA, host book club, enjoy a girl's weekend from time to time, all while still managing to share a life with a partner, you might be feeling the pull of, "there has to be a better way than this!"

Let's face it, you didn't get married and start a family so you could leave them behind each day to fight traffic, sit in an office and worry over someone else's business so they make all the money and you make the salary. I sure didn't. But, at the age of 35, I found myself director of customer service and volunteerism at a local nonprofit, working from home two days per week, paying for a nanny to snuggle and love my daughter so I could leave her and go to an office the remaining three. It broke my heart.

Like you, I wanted to be there for my child. If she was sick, I didn't want to feel guilty for not going into the office. If there was an event at school, I wanted to be there to see it. If there was a game after school, I wanted to take her and be present to watch her. If she needed help with homework, I wanted to have the energy to help.

Also like you, I felt the pull of doing something more. The whispers were getting louder. You know, those little voices in your head that sneak in while you are in the shower, walking, or driving, that give you brilliant ideas on how to save the planet or help people. I wanted to do something more with my life. Something big. And I'll just bet if you're reading this, you do too.

And finally, I wanted to set a good example for my little girl. I wanted to show her that you truly can have it all – a life, a career, and a family. She needed to see a strong woman caring for her, just like your kids do. A woman who can care for herself and her family, who can learn new things and share her talents with the world, and who can make the money necessary to provide for her family and be happy to boot.

Being a mompreneur means taking on risk in order to build your own business and career. It can be a dynamic, intensive, and highly rewarding professional decision, one that often helps people realize their dreams and find a fulfilling career. There are a ton benefits to becoming an entrepreneur that can be summed up in 3 primary categories: Freedom, Purpose, and Professional and Financial Growth.

"You don't have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step."

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Category One: Freedom

From scheduling to location, being an entrepreneur comes with a copious amount of freedom. As your own boss, you can set your own schedule to balance every area of your life and maximize your time. You can also work from anywhere your day takes you, making the entrepreneur lifestyle fluid and adaptable for busy professionals, family members, or community engagers. With complete autonomy, you can design a business that fits into your life and adapt it as your life evolves.

Category Two: Purpose

If you've ever encountered a professional that is unsatisfied in their role, you are probably familiar with the burnout and defeat that can accompany an unfulfilling occupation. As an entrepreneur, you can follow your dreams and build a company that works toward your true purpose. Not only will you find huge fulfillment in your company's impact in the world, you can't beat feeling excited every day. Shaping your own career and fulfilling your core values at work is a wonderful benefit of the entrepreneurial life.

What are your Core Values? If you've ever faced a life-changing decision wrought with uncertainty, like a job offer, prospective relationship, or a move, then you understand that often you need more than a pros and cons list. It's good to also know and understand your Core Values and leverage them to help in making the right choice for you and your family. When determining whether to start your own business, or deciding the type of business to create, utilize your Core Values.

Below are a few potential Core Values to give you a starting point from which to list, refine, and develop your own:

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Service | Love | Equality |
| Community | Compassion | Simplicity |
| Honesty | Purpose | Humility |
| Individuality | Integrity | Openness |
| Expressions | Kindness | Wisdom |
| Ambition | Righteousness | Courage |

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Beauty | Truthfulness | Generosity |
| Trustworthiness | Vision | Discipline |
| Flexibility | Respectfulness | Learning |
| Enjoyment | Optimism | Lightness |
| Persistence | Devotion | Achievement |

Choose a few values that ring true with you and list them here.

Marketing Pro Tip: Hold on tight to this list. Aside from being the values which influence your decisions, these same values will assist you in creating your company's key messages and value proposition in the future.

Category Three: Professional and Financial Growth

Being a business owner comes with all the perks of business leadership. Not only do you have control over your day and your overall company vision, but you will be regarded as an expert in your field. You will have countless opportunities for growth and development, and every experience will directly benefit your business as well! Additionally, you can feel confident in your expertise and get paid accordingly. With unlimited earning potential, you can set a reasonable salary and feel proud of your success.

While your initial reaction to becoming an entrepreneur may be fear, there are many wonderful benefits to entrepreneurship that can help you grow as a person and a professional. From following your passions to being your own boss, the entrepreneurial lifestyle is exciting, fulfilling, and an excellent option for autonomous individuals with a healthy sense of adventure.

But if you've already started your own business and been at it for a while, **then you may be staring straight into the face of Phase 2. Let's look at what the pangs of defeat look like to a Mompreneur.**



PHASE 2

FEELING THE PANGS OF DEFEAT

Phase 2: It's been a year since you started your small business and you're feeling the pangs of failure.

With a multitude of challenges including unrealistic expectations, an unsupportive environment, and fear of the unknown, it's easy to feel like the leap of faith you dared take dropped you into a deep, insurmountable gorge of challenges and setbacks. Let's take a closer look at each of these and how to overcome them.

1. Unrealistic Expectations - Rome wasn't built in a night, nor will your business be.

Expecting fast results is often accompanied by disappointment and a sudden twinge of failure. All great ideas take time to mature. Entrepreneurship requires a bit of sacrifice, but the trade-offs are well worth it. Understand that stagnated results or a little extra sacrifice does not directly correlate to failure.

"Don't give up before the miracle happens." ~ Fannie Flagg, *I Still Dream About You*

You can't expect to build an empire without putting in some long nights. Your idea may require you to sacrifice a few nights out with friends or dinner out with the family in order to work longer or save a few dollars, which may seem contrary to what you are trying to accomplish. Don't be discouraged; it won't always be like this. Take a deep breath, and a few minutes away, set some boundaries, and create space for you. Here's how:

It's important that you get out of the forest every now and then. Post a sign, or set your autoresponder, and let everyone know, "We will be out Monday for business development and strategy. We look forward to returning with brilliant ideas and new offerings for you on Tuesday. Until then, please feel free to call or text in an emergency."

I have found that customers truly do understand and respect your space. Don't feel guilty about using "office hours" for creation. It's all a part of growing your business. And, when you take that day to work on your business, knock off at 5:00 and make a nice dinner your family can enjoy together around the dinner table. Good food and being with the ones you love is a perfect way to recharge before you get back to

business the next day, plus, they get to hear all about the exciting new plans you came up with during your business development day.

Boundary setting is crucial when you are creating your business, otherwise you will find that people will take advantage of your time.

I made a huge mistake when I started my business by allowing customers to text me. This is a problem for several reasons. *One*, I don't work by text and will often forget things that people send to me that way. I work from email. It is my workflow. Texts are alright in emergencies, but on a regular basis they are a no-no. And *two*, I have clients all over the country, so if someone in PST wants to be a priority on Monday morning, they may text me at 7:30pm PST which is 10:30pm EST, an hour past my bedtime. If I forget to turn on Do Not Disturb, this disturbs my peace. Why? Because any time after 5:30pm or prior to 9:30am (unless scheduled otherwise) is "me" time. This is a hard boundary for me and my business.

So, be up front about your office hours and stick to them. Make the period prior to your start time a time to exercise, meditate, get your kids off to school, and create. Midday take time for lunch. Even if it's only 30 minutes, stop, turn everything off (or turn on NCIS), and eat something. You must nourish your body and step away to recharge to avoid burnout. And finally, flip that closed sign at 5:30. Now, I know this isn't ALWAYS possible, but for 355 days of the year stick to your guns on this. Turn off the computer, turn off the phone, and cook a meal. Sit down with your family and eat. Talk about your day and theirs. Play a game. Do a little craft. Help with homework. Go for a walk together or do some yoga. Set yourself up for the next day's success. Then put the kids to bed, have a glass of wine alone or with your partner, and shut down your brain.

Marketing Pro Tip: Don't forget to share a little of your authentic self, behind the scenes, with your audience. They love knowing who you are and what you do in your life besides work. It makes you relatable, and in turn, it sets a good example for them and reinforces your priorities with them.

2. **Unsupportive Environment-** Having the wrong partners or crumbling under negativity can make even the best idea come to a screeching halt. Building a team that shares a common purpose and works together with the same level of

motivation can allow you to push forward, even when the going gets tough. It is important to build a network of supportive allies and to maintain a strong vision for your business. Let's look at two ways to build a solid foundation for your support network:

Find an accountability partner to foster your success, and theirs. Your business can grow exponentially, and with less anxiety, when you find the right accountability partner or mentor to keep you on track.

Primarily, an accountability partner serves as a safe space to commit to action, analyze new prospects, and dream big. He or she can act as a sounding board for new ideas, evaluate weaknesses and difficulties, and be a buddy to celebrate success or assess shortcomings. With the right partner, you can set goals, analyze risk, set realistic steps to achieve your vision, and celebrate the success of your efforts. *The American Society of Training and Development found that people are 65% more likely to meet a goal after committing it to another person, and 95% more successful when they meet regularly with that same partner to track actionable steps.*

Relationships are the cornerstone of a successful business and a fulfilling life. If you want your business to be strong, you need to understand and appreciate the value of your familial and community relationships. Let's look at five ways healthy relationships support your business:

"Relationships are the currency of power." ~ Peter Block, author, consultant, and community builder

#5 Experience

There is no better place to learn from experience than within your community. Likewise, tapping into the knowledge other business owners have can help you better understand your market, local economy, and significantly improve your relationship with your customers.

#4 Connections

Your family and community are your first line of connection. Having strong relationships across the community gives you access to potential investors, partners, customers, and opportunities. You can find your

business rapidly expanding, and your brand awareness skyrocketing, all through the power of the connections your community and family offer.

#3 Reciprocity

When your company invests in the community, the community invests back. Small businesses can make a meaningful impact in the community through anything from charitable donations to participating in volunteer events. When community members feel supported, you can expect to see your efforts returned. By nature, giving and receiving is reciprocal, and there is no better place to invest than in your own community.

#2 Trust

A company that has the respect and support of their community, and a strong backing from their family, can often guarantee a natural perception of trustworthiness. By maintaining your relationships and investing in your family and community, your business will naturally amass a reputation as a local business with shared values and a sincerity your customers will find appealing.

#1 Support Network

If the small business lifestyle ever feels stressful, unyielding, and simply lonely, your community and family are a strong support network to pick you up. Financially, small businesses can face risk, but a support network can help you feel confident in your decisions and offer guidance or assistance. When you hit a tough spot and need advice, a healthy community will offer you plentiful resources to support you intellectually. Most importantly, your family and community provide emotional support to keep you balanced and grateful.

Business Pro Tip: If there isn't a networking group in your community or area of expertise, create a Mastermind group of your own. Identify colleagues who work in different but complimentary areas of business (i.e. marketing, finance, business development, human resources) and invite them to meet once every month or two over lunch to discuss challenges and help one another along their paths to success.

3. **Fear of the Unknown - It is only human to look at the vast unknown and feel uncertain.** How can we expect to walk with confidence into a future filled with infinite opportunities and unforeseen circumstances? But fearing what the future may hold often leads entrepreneurs to resist change. Change is a natural biproduct of movement and is the only true constant in life. While the ambiguity may seem daunting, without embracing change a small business will almost certainly find itself stuck. Entrepreneurs need to bravely step into the future as pioneers changing the world. Isn't that the whole point?

If you find yourself in this stuck point, it might be time for Massive Action. Let's look at what it is and how we can use it to get your business moving in the right direction:

The first important thing to realize about Massive Action is that it requires complete ownership. You must conceptualize your goals as your duty and responsibility. This means, you are taking full ownership not only of the success, but of your problems, failures, and mistakes. You must constantly expect more from yourself, more than anyone would expect from you. This causes you to constantly think big, fully invest, and work toward a powerful purpose.

So how do you build a Massive Action Plan (MAP)? It can be accomplished in these eight easy steps:

1. **Clearly define your primary goal** - Clearly define your primary goal so you know exactly what you are trying to achieve.
2. **Set sub-goals and timelines** - define sub-goals starting in larger increments of time and moving down to the weekly or daily level.
3. **Eliminate and Delegate** - Know what must be done by you and what you can move off your MAP to free up space and time.
4. **Identify Gains and Losses** - In order to stay motivated during your MAP, you need to know what you are getting into. What will you give up making this possible? What sacrifices might be required and are you prepared to say "yes"? If you can't commit fully, you need to reevaluate the plan.
5. **Find Accountability** - Finding a way to stay accountable to your deadlines and objectives will keep you going! [Check out our recent post about Accountability Partners for more information.](#)
6. **Let Go of Fear** - Find a way to release yourself from the fear so you can

begin with full commitment to the process.

7. **Work Smart** - From location to time blocking, maximizing your concentration and work time can help make the steps achievable.
8. **Review and Adjust** - The most important part of your MAP is reviewing your progress and adjusting as needed.

Massive Action is rising above and beyond the expectations others have for you as well as the expectations you have set for yourself.

Honestly, Phase 2 scared me far more than Phase 1. In July 2017, a year after I incorporated, and after experiencing the worst financial year ever, using all my savings to live, fear seemed to follow me everywhere I went.

That was the year of self-help for me. I continued to work hard, but my habits changed. I started getting up early to read. I read any book I could find related to manifesting one's dreams and desires. I began to look at things through the lens of gratitude and abundance instead of fear and change. In addition to my daily reading I would write my gratitudes. After a while I added walking to my routine, clearing my head before beginning work each day, so my reading and journaling became walking in gratitude.

Coaching Pro Tip: Walk in gratitude before you go to work. It doesn't matter if you have 15 minutes or two hours, start with thank you, thank you, thank you with each step you take. For the time you allow yourself to walk, thank God, the Universe, your guides, angels, and ancestors for all they contribute to your being. Then expand. Think of all the wonderful people who assist in your life every day – every person at the utility companies from customer service to the linemen that keep your power on; your clients for all they contribute to not only your finances but your success; your child(ren)'s teachers and administrators and school system for providing them with the best education possible in a safe environment. But wait! Don't forget to be grateful for all those things that haven't happened yet – the new products and services you are creating to help your clients (past, present, and future); the additional income; working less and receiving more.

Coaching Pro Tip: When my anxiety and frustration are causing me to lose sleep, gratitude lifts me out of it. If something is truly troubling...identify it. Whether it's a relationship, business partnership, child's attitude, bully, or otherwise, gratitude can lift

you up and out of the doldrums. Once you identify the issue, find 10 things about the heart of that issue that you can be grateful for. Impossible you say! No, it's not.

Here's a prime example: A coaching client once shared with me that her business partner, a 50/50 partner, had stopped executing her active role in the business only weeks after it had begun, leaving her to do all the hands-on work and management while only receiving 50% of the proceeds. The work had become overwhelming and pushed her to the brink of giving up. After completing the exercise above, here is what she had to say:

"It was really hard for me to think of 10 reasons I was grateful for [Sue], but I did what you asked and came up with really silly things at first – I'm grateful for the cup of coffee she bought me the other day, I'm grateful she challenged me to die my hair Merlot that one time, I'm grateful we've been friends all these years, blah, blah. With each day I began to feel my attitude shift. I still didn't appreciate being left with all of the work and only half of the proceeds, but I began to see her for all of her contributions to my growth, like having to learn accounting because she didn't contribute that, being her talent, to the business. It truly was life changing."

Even in the face of absolute frustration she was able to flip the switch and see things differently, and so can you.

However, if you've grown beyond this point in your business to overcome new business blues, you might have put all of yourself in your business and forgotten about why you became an entrepreneur in the first place. If that's the case, **let's talk about Phase 3, the balancing act.**



PHASE 3

BALANCING ACT

Phase 3: Your business is a success! Congratulations! You've reached your targets and accomplished your goals, but in the process of building your business around your family, you lost yourself. What happened to there being more to life than a job? How can you correct your course?

As an entrepreneur, days move fast and there are often a hundred things to juggle in a single moment. If we were all machines, maybe a non-stop life wouldn't be so bad. However, humans need time to decompress, maintain connections, and simply breathe. Being an entrepreneur can be a ton of fun, but if you aren't careful, you'll find yourself burned-out and unfulfilled.

When you're passionate about what you are doing, it can be very easy to lose yourself in the process. Much like in a new relationship. You devote all your time and resources to its success only to find out later that it is not all there is to life.

So how can you balance your identity as an entrepreneur with the other responsibilities and roles in your life? Let's start by renaming balance. Instead of saying "work-life balance", let's instead define "**harmonious balance.**"

Your work, just like all aspects of you, is important. We aren't trying to find time in the day for two opposing forces, work and life, but rather we are looking for a way to incorporate all aspects of life together. This isn't an either-or dichotomy but rather an inclusive bubble that can be filled however you see fit.

Balance doesn't have to mean 50/50. In fact, it doesn't even need to be fractions! Some people like to build lifestyle into their brand so they can fulfill work obligations while enjoying hobbies. Others find ways to learn something new at work so they can simultaneously improve their business while fulfilling an urge for personal development. Being mindful of how you structure your life can help you recharge while you work and stay grateful for each moment of the day. The secret to mompreneurial balance is to incorporate all aspects of your life in a way that is acceptable for you.

Learning to prioritize all aspects of your life equally throughout the day will help you schedule time for the things that are most important. Make time to exercise, plan meals, spend time with friends, have a date night with your partner, have a date night with each of your kids, learn something new, follow your heart, help other people, and then

acknowledge it. Once you can see all aspects of your life clearly, you can prioritize what is important for different segments of the day and set boundaries for times you need to dedicate solely to one area.

One of the biggest advantages of being an entrepreneur is your ability to design your own schedule, one that allows you to incorporate all your weekly obligations, ambitions, and rechargeable moments. Make yourself a priority, just as much as family or work, and you will be able to clear your vision and enter each day with renewed passion and spirit.

Harmonious balance looks different for each entrepreneur, and there is no right or wrong way to arrange your life. Whether you decide to mix business and personal time or set strict boundaries between the two areas, it is essential to remember that you are priority number one. Without you, your business can't function. So, finding a way to have all areas of life co-exist is essential to your success as an entrepreneur. Let go of the fear: find balance that works for you and own it.

Coaching Pro Tip: Letting go of people pleasing and the guilt that surrounds it to make you and your family a priority is the best thing you can do to become a fulfilled and harmoniously balanced whole entrepreneur.

As you can see, from the moment you get that first whisper of a brilliant product or business concept to the day you shut the doors, being a mompreneur is both challenging and rewarding. Striking that harmonious balance which provides you with the space to be brilliant, the support to grow your family and your career, and time to care for yourself is the ultimate goal. With the right team you can Master Mompreneurship. I know you can. I have faith in you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Are you ready to be UNSTOPPABLE?

There IS a place where you can find inspiration and direction. Have you ever dreamed of having a guide, like a personal strategist, to help you...launch your small business...live your dreams...express your creativity...take yourself seriously...think outside the box?

Entrepreneur coach and marketing maven Lindy Chaffin Start provides entrepreneurs, just like you, with insight, strategy and advice to help them achieve their business goals, and more.

Lindy lives her life on purpose, using her unique gifts as a marketer, entrepreneur, certified Entrepreneur coach, author, and radio show host to lead other small business owners to realize their dreams by putting their passions, and advertising, to work.

"I use my superpowers of creativity, planning, and intuition to create marketing strategy and advertising to help each business I work with grow. Each business is different and has its own personality, audience, and voice. My goal is to help small business owners identify these unique traits and leverage them to achieve their goals."

If you'd like to learn more about Unstoppable Start Studios, visit our website www.unstoppablestart.com or follow us on social media: