

Starting + Growing

A WELLNESS BUSINESS

BY KIMBERLY WILSON





Top 10 Tips

“DO ONE THING EVERY DAY THAT SCARES YOU.”
—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

1 START SMALL.

2 GROW ORGANICALLY.

3 CONSTANTLY INNOVATE.

4 CREATE A CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE.

5 BE THE BRAND.

6 CULTIVATE COMMUNITY.

7 GIVE BACK.

8 PRACTICE MINDFUL COMMUNICATION.

9 INCORPORATE YOGA’S YAMAS & NIYAMAS.

10 NURTURE YOUR SPIRIT.



Source:
Year of Tranquility
by Kimberly Wilson

My Story

“I’VE LEARNED THAT PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID, PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU DID, BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.” —MAYA ANGELOU

That Maya Angelou quote has been my guide over the past two decades of entrepreneurship. When I hosted the Tranquil Space team farewell party after selling the studio in 2017, I incorporated this quote into my speech and encouraged others to take this mantra with them. *It’s gold.*

Growing up in Oklahoma, I never envisioned myself starting a business. Yet when I moved to DC, finding myself disenchanted with adulting and craving community, I decided to invite strangers into my living room for yoga. This was 1999, I was 26 years old. I quickly learned that I enjoyed the process of setting up a nurturing environment, connecting with clients, and seeing the studio grow.

Over the years, I added workshops in 2000, staff, retreats, and a teacher training in 2001, a clothing line in 2002, a blog in 2004, a podcast in 2005, a book and non-profit in 2006, another location in 2007, and a 4,000-square-foot flagship location complete with chandeliers and reclaimed wood in 2008. All of this was followed by more books, online programs, a two-month Tranquility Tour across North America in a vintage camper in 2013, and, in 2017, the selling of my baby to a yoga chain.

When the studio was turning 10 in 2009, I began to ponder the next decade. How did I want it to look? How did I want to feel? What was/wasn't working? Before I could do a deep dive into this, I decided to return to graduate school to pursue a master's degree in social work with the intention of adding psychotherapy into my offerings. Little did I know then that it would be a major transition for me down the road.

During this process of running multiple businesses, connecting with an online community, and going to graduate school, I struggled to find inner peace AND productivity.

While I would never claim to have found the magic potion, I definitely have tools and experience trying to juggle both over the past 20 years. From making the leap into self-employment (scary!), to signing my first commercial lease, to taking on massive debt during a recession (super scary!), to selling a business, to opening a private psychotherapy practice, I've learned a lot along the way.

Entrepreneurship is defined by Wikipedia as “a process of designing, launching and running a new business, which is often initially a small business.” Although you may not be in the market to launch a new enterprise, each day you ARE launching your own personal empire. After all, you are the boss of YOU! Benefits include creating community, developing leadership skills, seeing your work change lives, creating products and services you love, and believing in what you do.

You may love or not-so-love the term “girl boss,” which has become a bit of a thing since Sophia Amoruso's best-selling book of the same name, but the concept is applicable to each of us. For example, a definition I found of a girl boss on Free Dictionary is, “a confident, capable woman who pursues her own ambitions instead of working for others or otherwise settling in life.” I love it!

Now, this doesn't mean you have to run off and open your own thing, however I'll bet you're already doing a little girl bossing. Do you volunteer for an organization? Do you have

a side hustle? Do you have a blog, website, YouTube channel, or podcast? Do you have a social media presence? Are you passionate about a particular cause? Do you want to make sure your life and work have an impact? And on and on.

Imagine spending your days working with your strengths and passions while calling your own shots. You can be a homemaker or a 9-to-5er working for a bank and still think of your role within the house or your role within a larger organization as a business.

Businesses need systems to run efficiently, a deep commitment to doing the best work, and a focus on creating an experience—all of that can be done in our everyday lives! Simply by showing up as the best version of ourselves. Being an entrepreneur (or anyone who goes slightly against the grain) is scary and yet so rewarding. And, frankly, is a necessity.

Poet and feminist Audre Lorde speaks to this: “Next time, ask: what's the worst that will happen? Then push yourself a little further than you dare. Once you start to speak, people will yell at you. They will interrupt you, put you down and suggest it's personal. And the world won't end. And the speaking will get easier and easier. And you will find you have fallen in love with your own vision, which you may never have realized you had. And you will lose some friends and lovers, and realize you don't miss them. And new ones will find you and cherish you. And at last you'll know with surpassing certainty that only one thing is more frightening than speaking your truth. And that is not speaking.”

Pay attention to your longings. Observe your strengths. Consider your brand (what people think of when they hear your name). Ask yourself the hard questions (what do I want, need, and feel?) daily. Take the time to connect to your inner entrepreneur—she deserves to be attended to with great care and compassion. Acknowledge that part of you who wants BIG things for herself and the world. Repeat this Maya Angelou quote to yourself, “Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.” Let's go get 'em!



Source:
Year of Tranquility
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Four Weeks of Reflection

“THE MOST COURAGEOUS ACT IS STILL TO THINK FOR YOURSELF. ALOUD.” —COCO CHANEL

WEEK 1: PRODUCTIVITY

When asked how I juggle various projects, my answer is always that I write everything down—getting it out of my head and onto paper. I carry my planner, an ideas book, and a journal with me at all times.

My most helpful tool is clarifying weekly, and sometimes daily, MITs (Most Important Tasks). Noting what must be accomplished that day/week helps put the rest of the to-dos in perspective. This is my Sunday night exercise.

I also try to break projects into smaller tasks (remember those micromovements), so instead of “launch fall collection,” I write, “choose colors” and “order lab dips.”

We all wear so many hats. To avoid switching them multiple times throughout the day, I set times for handling email, writing, projects, home stuff, clients, exercise, and family. That way I can be fully present with the person or task at hand.

Productivity also needs rest. One of the biggest lessons I've learned during the past 20 years of entrepreneurship is to step away from the computer, breathe, and say "yes!" to fun, even if I have more to-dos (there always are). There are few things that a hot bath, walk, or good sleep can't fix or at least offer a fresh perspective on.

To explore your own productivity, write out everything that's on your mind. Review it for action steps to add to your to-do lists. Clarify your MITs. Track your time over the next two weeks to get an average of how you're spending it. Familiar with the 80/20 rule? Also known as the Pareto Principle, it means that 80 percent of our results come from 20 percent of our actions or, another way to look at it is, 20 percent of our work drives 80 percent of our outcomes. This rule serves as a gentle nudge to cut out the non-essentials that generate little value to declutter our time and energy so that we can focus on what matters most.

List your various hats. Explore ways to wear them during time chunks (hello, Pomodoro Technique) that align with your complementary energy level such as early morning exercise or evening writing.

Create your ideal version of the week while keeping your various hats and energy levels in mind.

Be the boss of your time and energy! As Michael Gerber of *E-Myth* fame says, "Work ON your business, not just IN your business." That way the day-to-day minutia doesn't overpower the big picture.

List your projects, clarify your MITs, track your time, and consider your ideal 168 hours (the hours in one week). List a few ways to bridge any gap between the two keeping energy levels in mind.

A large grid of pink dots for writing notes, consisting of 20 columns and 20 rows of dots.

WEEK 2: PERSONAL BRAND

Your personal brand is the sum total of what you do, how you do it and why you do it. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, famously said, “Your brand is what people say about you when you’re not in the room.”

How would you describe your personal brand? Think of it as your “secret sauce.” You know, that thing that makes you YOU!

Here are a few ways to help craft it, in no particular order:

1. Build a platform through your online presence. This is your own personal stage that you share with the world.
2. Highlight your unique strengths, interests, and quirks (hello, Pigs & Pugs).
3. Become an expert in your field.
4. Share your expertise through teaching, consulting, writing, and speaking.
5. Define and identify your target market and offer a product or service that will serve your tribe.
6. Get clear on what success will look like for you in 1, 5, 10 years.
7. Be consistent in your messaging and frequency.
8. Provide value and inspiration by creating tools, tips, and tutorials.
9. Create community by commenting, posting, hosting in-person and online meetups, creating a book club or movie club—anything that will bring like-hearted people together.
10. Create emotion and an experience. For example, Pigs & Pugs shares the stories of the animals who receive our micro-grants and at my former yoga studio, we served tea and cookies at the end of each class.

Consider your own personal brand. How would you describe it? How would you like it to be described?



WEEK 3: TEACHING & CONSULTING

TEACHING

Sharing your knowledge with others and guiding them through the process is the act of teaching. For the past two decades I've been teaching events ranging from yoga classes to international retreats to intimate salons. Teaching yoga at gyms started as a side hustle for me that grew into a full-time career.

The beauty of teaching is that I've been able to take many trainings, classes, workshops, and certificate courses over the years that contribute to my knowledge and ultimately allow me to incorporate it into my special sauce.

Here's where the interplay of personal and professional mix because I'm studying subjects I love so it doesn't feel like work per se. You know, nothing like those stodgy conferences in hotel ballrooms that we have to attend for our industry. It's different when you make a conscious choice to study, learn, and share.

Think about what you could teach. English as a second language. Coach a little league team. Spinning. Making terrariums. Macramé. Knitting. Hand lettering. Sewing. Yoga. Decorating on a budget. Minimalist parenting. Pilates. Dog training. Getting published. Managing a non-profit. Finding personal style. Personal training. And on and on.

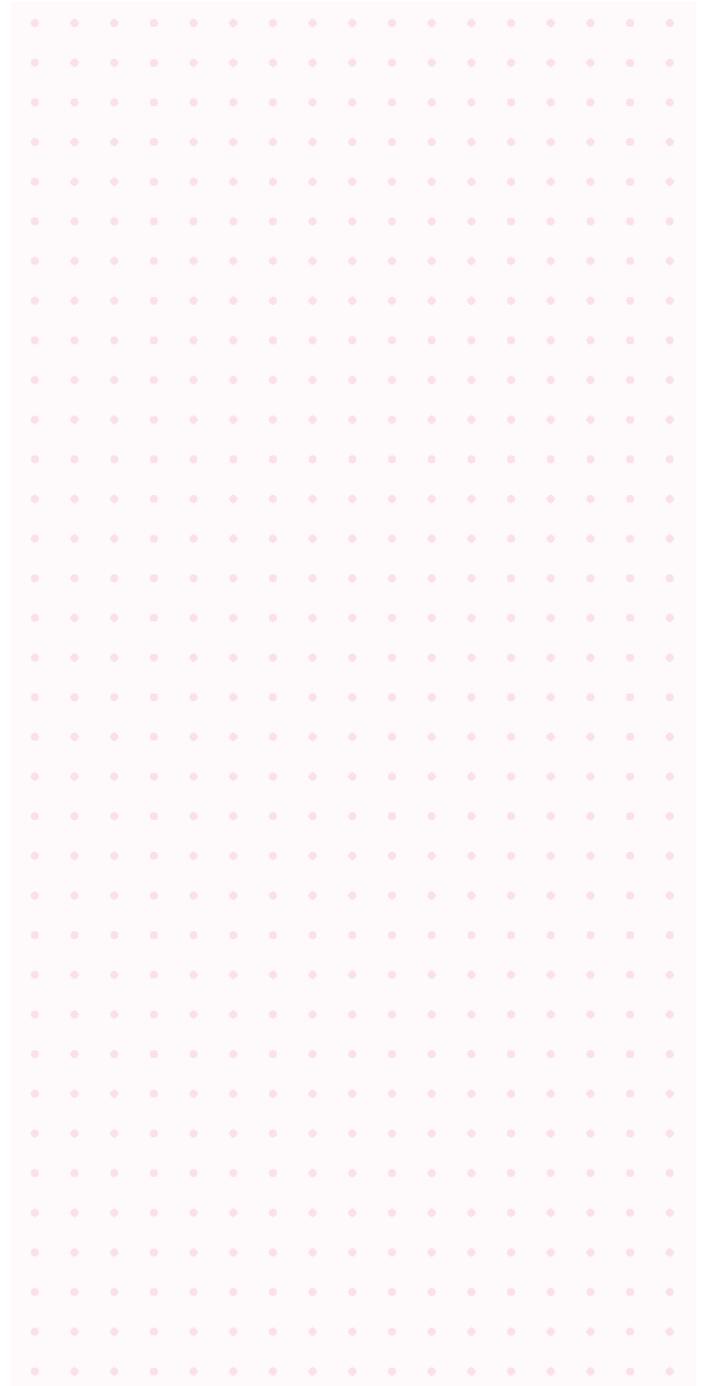
CONSULTING

Giving advice to others based on your experience and/or studies is what consulting is all about. For years I received emails from well-meaning people wanting to take me to tea to "pick my brain" (anyone else think that phrasing is creepy?). Due to lack of time and energy (I'm an introvert so sitting with a stranger rarely entices me), I grew challenged by the requests and set up my mentoring program back in the early 2000s.

I called it mentoring because consulting felt too corporate and coaching also didn't resonate. This allowed me to direct people to an offering versus just saying no. And it allowed me to feel compensated for my time and knowledge.

Now consider what you could consult on. Moving to a new country. Health coaching. Starting a business. Growing a business. Personal stylist. Building a website. Workplace culture. Nutrition. Transitioning to plant-based eating. Decorating for the holidays. Private yoga lessons. Managing a team.

Consider what you may be interested in incorporating into your life as a teacher and/or consultant. Is there a side hustle opportunity to spread your expertise?



WEEK 4: SPEAKING & WRITING

SPEAKING

While getting up in front of an audience is not for everyone, with a few tools, you may actually enjoy it. I first began by speaking on panels about entrepreneurship, and it's a great place to start because all eyes aren't on you. When I gave a keynote at a conference or spoke at a few corporate events, I had a standard speech that I altered for the varied audiences similar to my writing noted below.

Speaking gigs are also great opportunities to establish yourself as an expert and expand your reach. Share your products or services by placing items in goody bags or create a private page on your website that's aligned with the talk and offers more resources. Although I'm often anxious beforehand, I find myself settling in and actually enjoying it. Usually!

Here are a few tips to shine: be prepared, make eye contact with the audience, your opening is everything (include a statistic, question, or story), speak slowly (I'm a fast talker so I have to consciously sllloowwww it down), encourage action and/or takeaways, and end with a summary and gratitude.

What about you? Would you like to speak at meetups, conferences, community events, book clubs, or some other setting? What's your area(s) of expertise? Share that beautiful voice of yours!

WRITING

Yes, we had an entire month dedicated to this topic, but not focused around the idea of using it as a tool to build a platform, make extra money, or create community. Writing is an effective way to do all the above. For me, it started with a blog in 2004, then a book in 2006, and it continues to be an important mode of communication.

Consider topics you LOVE and feel like an expert (of sorts) in. Maybe it's blending essential oils, telling your recovery story, or offering tips on living with less. There are magazines always looking for submissions, along with websites such as *Medium* or *Huffington Post*, and even your neighborhood newsletter.

I started with a "5 Tips to Tranquility" essay in 2000 and I tweaked it for various audiences such as my college alumnae group, a DC small business center, a DC neighborhood print newsletter, my yoga studio, and I'm sure there's a few more. That piece got a lot of play, simply because I offered it for free and the sources were looking for content.

Do you have your own version of that 5 Tips piece? Today there's even more opportunity to share via social media, blogs, podcasts, and websites. How can you spread your message via speaking or writing to grow and nurture your tribe?





Action Plan/Takeaways

THE TIP THAT MOST RESONATED WITH ME IS ...

THE EXPERIENCE THAT I WANT TO CREATE IS ...

I WILL LIVE MY BRAND BY ...

MY ENTREPRENEURIAL GOALS FOR THIS YEAR ARE ...

IN ONE YEAR ...

IN FIVE YEARS ...

I WILL GROW AND INNOVATE BY ...

MY STRENGTHS ARE ...

“WE MUST HAVE A THEME, A GOAL, A PURPOSE IN OUR LIVES. IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'RE AIMING, YOU DON'T HAVE A GOAL. MY GOAL IS TO LIVE MY LIFE IN SUCH A WAY THAT WHEN I DIE, SOMEONE CAN SAY, SHE CARED.” —MARY KAY ASH

About Kimberly

I'm a writer, psychotherapist in private practice, and designer of the locally-sewn, eco-friendly TranquiliT clothing line. I also serve as the president of Pigs & Pugs Project with a mission to make the lives of pigs and pugs happier. I dream of Paris and global animal welfare.

You'll often find me sipping fragrant green tea, in pink ballet slippers practicing demi-pliés and dégagés, or leading retreats around the world.

I have master's degrees in women's studies and social work, certificates in journal therapy and applied positive psychology, and am currently studying veterinary social work. My work has been featured in *US News & World Report*, *Washingtonian*, *Fast Company*, and *Bella Grace*.

I live in a petite pink palace in Washington, DC, with a rescue kitty, three rescue pugs, and my partner Tim. Indulge in tranquilosophy via my blog and podcast, *Tranquility du Jour*, and online courses.

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