

**Excerpt**

**Realizing a Vision**  
*Words of Wisdom for Young Female Entrepreneurs*

**Introduction**

*Realizing is Vision, Words of Wisdom for Young Female Entrepreneurs* is a guide for Generation Z high school girls who have a business or are emerging entrepreneurs.

### **So Why Did I Write It?**

This book is designed to help you! As a young woman you know there is more to being an entrepreneur than having a good business plan. It doesn't matter what stage you are on your entrepreneurial journey. So many of the soft skills you need to know to build a sustainable business are not taught in school. It's been proven females learn, communicate, and lead differently than their male counterparts. Unfortunately, there are very few organizations that focus on what traits and characteristics female entrepreneurs need to develop for success. I want to ensure whoever reads the book understands the importance of the characteristics of accomplished women entrepreneurs.

The wisdom shared with you from the book can be a powerful tool for growing your business. It is meant to help you get more out of your own life as much as it is in our business

I also wrote *Realizing a Vision*, to help you develop the vision for your business with the ability to take on the world. I've met many Generation Z high school girls who are unique and self-sufficient. I admire the fact all of you are quite capable of making your own decisions.

Throughout this book, you'll be introduced to young women who have built exceptional, innovative, and profitable businesses. You'll learn from award-winning women who have mentored others to start and grow successful businesses.

### **What to Expect**

I've seen how the information helps to increase the ability of young women to make a differences with their businesses. You'll be able to figure out what you need the most from the book and then decide what topics to focus on first. You may already have some of the characteristics shared by talented women entrepreneurs. After all, you think differently from young women in other generations.

Look at the Table of Contents. While reviewing it, look beyond your environment and think about the limitations you've placed upon yourself. You may find advice that will help you make changes in your way of thinking.

After you review the Table of Contents take a peek at the written exercises. They were created to guide you just as much as the chapter contents. When you have finished reading the book and completing the exercises, you'll know what you personally need to complete your toolkit. You'll easily be able to apply the points to your life as an entrepreneur.

### **Enjoy Realizing a Vision, Words of Wisdom for Young Female Entrepreneurs**

I want to see all high school girls who are entrepreneurs and emerging entrepreneurs become as accomplished and influential as the trailblazers ahead of them.

Imagine your story as an inspiration for other girls to move forward with entrepreneurship to find solutions to problems, create new products, or improve ones already in the marketplace. You may become a mentor when people see your authenticity and hear about your entrepreneurial journey. Opportunities will come where you can make a difference.

Whether you are an emerging entrepreneur or one who has been around for a while, for the techniques to work, you need to be committed to your personal and business growth. You need to be focused on becoming an entrepreneur who makes a difference in your mission and business. The hard work and determination to succeed along with becoming financially responsible will have a strong effect on the world you know.

By the end of the book, you'll have a toolkit filled with wisdom from exceptional female entrepreneurs of all ages and lifestyles. I made sure a variety of industries and types of businesses were represented because your generation can impact the world. It all starts with an idea, a plan, and an overwhelming passion and vision to find answers to a challenge or problem. After all, you are part of the most imaginative generation.

**Excerpt-Chapter 1**

**Passion**

*An Essential Ingredient In The Recipe For Success*

## ***Passion... An Essential Ingredient In The Recipe For Success***

Passion is an essential ingredient in the recipe for success. Although it is an intangible quality, we can measure its presence by the amount of desire you have to keep moving forward, no matter how difficult things seem. To be more exact passion is a strong feeling of enthusiasm, excitement, or extravagant fondness for an idea or activity. It is something you can do every day without getting tired of it. In order to have the commitment level and confidence needed to follow through when faced with challenges, passion for an idea or activity is essential.

Everyone is passionate about something. As an entrepreneur passion is a drive, ambition, and the love of what you do and who benefits from it. Think about it for yourself. What is it that gets you so excited you can't wait to work on it? You love doing it so much you get up early to get started on the weekends or during school breaks. It is something you can do every day without getting tired of it. This may mean getting homework done as soon as possible so you can work on your passion.

Entrepreneurs see problems and find solutions. They use their passion to solve a problem and then create change.

## **Challenges of Becoming a Female Entrepreneur in High School**

You have to fall in love with every aspect of what it takes to run the business including working long hours, facing challenges, and overcoming adversity.

There are risks involved and always a chance the business will fail. A lot of time and focus are needed to plan and launch a business. Time management between family requests and working on a business may be a challenge. Then there is the fear if a daughter becomes economically self-sufficient she will quit school to concentrate on her business. In some cases that may be true, although financial independence can be a way to cover school expenses. For those girls who want to attend college, it can help pay for tuition or living expenses. You may also want to talk to a relative, schoolteacher or counselor about your passion and business idea. They may be able to give you a new perspective on how to manage the situation

Balancing school studies, free time, and social lives is always a challenge for high school girls. It takes discipline to develop ways of overcoming the challenge. To face a challenge, find a circle of people who are positive and enthusiastic. Stay away from negative and toxic people.

### **You Know Yourself Better Than Anyone Else**

Be assured age does not make a difference when it comes to discovering your passion. Think about all the ways you can turn your passion or passions into a business. You may be passionate about activities like coding, creating innovative applications, dance, painting murals, designing websites, or taking care of rescued animals. All of these could be translated into an entrepreneurial venture while you are in high school and grown until you decide to either sell it or expand into other areas. The more business opportunities you see the easier it will be to find the one that will work for you.

You know yourself better than anyone else and are the only one who can truly find your passion. It is important to please yourself and not let someone else convince you otherwise. Family members, friends, neighbors, and teachers love to give their opinions. They only see what is happening on the outside of you. As a result, they want you to focus your time and attention on their ideas because it feels your time and attention on their ideas because it feels right for them. Refuse to let others decide what your passion is and the path you should take.

### **Talent Does Not Always Equate to Passion**

Most people do not know talent does not always equate to passion. A friend or relative knows you have a talent for an activity and thinks it would be the perfect reason for a business. You may be encouraged to start the business simply because others say you have a talent for it. Before you start the business ask yourself if the reason you are doing it is because you are passionate about it or is it to please someone else.

Ana Rivas is a perfect example of how a family member believed her talent would make a good business. At the age of 14, Ana began a small business designing and selling hair accessories to her friends and on Etsy. She loved fashion and had a real talent for designing the

accessories. Ana attended the Los Angeles Business Magnet School with an emphasis on fashion. It was there Ana began a fashion club, wrote a fashion blog, and with club members created a fashion magazine. The magazine was well received and the fashion club members appeared on a Los Angeles television program for cool teens. Ana's mother wanted her to continue the Etsy business and apply to a fashion design school.

During her senior year of high school, Ana realized it was more important to please herself than her mother. The fashion club disbanded and the focus of the magazine changed from fashion to literature.

Ana had been the photographer for the club's magazine. She also coordinated the photo shoots. That was when Ana found her true passion was photography. She wanted to spend time in college taking photography and graphic design courses. Ana never tired of creating innovative pictures with her photography. During the summer of Ana's junior year of college, she exhibited her photographs at shows and accepted commissioned assignments. That was the beginning of Ana's second entrepreneurial journey. She started Ana Cristel Photography when she was 21 years old.

### **Ideas For Finding Your Passion**

When you do not know what your passion is here are some suggestions:

- Look around and see what sparks your passion. Look at your surroundings with an open mind. The same holds true when driving or walking around your town.
- Window shopping or browsing the Internet may give you some ideas.
- While on vacation, a school-sponsored trip, Spring Break trip, look at activities or places you will visit. Watch to see if something sparks your interest.
- What are you curious about or naturally drawn to when you hear others talking about it, find information on the Internet, or read an article in your favorite magazine or blog? Do you clip articles on the subject and save them for future reference?
- What particular causes do you believe in strongly and want to change the world to find a solution? What message do you want to get to others to help contribute to a solution?

- Have you found through your school's community service projects an activity you love to do? Do you get excited to do it after school or on the weekends?
- What excites you? It may be an activity like, motorcycle riding, surfing, kayaking, fly-fishing, and camping. It may be something like reading mystery novels, poems by famous writers or even researching the stories of young entrepreneurs.
- What are your greatest assets? You might know how to plan, take action, and follow-through.
- There may be a product you can redesign to fit an entirely different market or fill the need of the current market.

## **Brainstorming**

To decide if your idea is feasible it always helps to bounce ideas around with trusted people. Some high school girls have what appears to be the perfect business idea, yet at the time the capital needed to launch it is unrealistic. Through brainstorming, you may discover another business idea that is financially within your means. I am not suggesting discarding the original idea; instead look at ways it could come together at a later date. Your passion is still your business. You are using it in creating one business in two segments.

There will be experienced business people who will be happy to brainstorm help determine the most realistic idea. If you aren't sure who to have in a brainstorming group, the following suggestions may help:

- If your parents are supportive include them in the mix.
- A relative with experience in the industry or type of business you want to start.
- An instructor or school counselor who knows your passion and knows you can make a business from it.
- Someone who understands the financial obligations of running any type of business.

**Who do you want to brainstorm with when you are ready to develop a business around what you are passionate about?**



The following is an example of how brainstorming can help make a difference with when to start a business, no matter how passionate someone is about the idea. Two 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls decided to start a business redesigning apparel that was currently sold in stores to their age group. The girls' thought they knew better what teen girls really liked rather than the manufacturers and stores. The girls were tired of clothing companies forcing their design ideas on them.

One of the girls approached her aunt for advice on the idea and how to get started. The aunt had worked in the fashion industry years before and also helped women across the country launch and grows their businesses. Each of the girls had their ideas sketched. They also had a website design. The girls knew what kind of fabric to use and had already decided what to charge per garment. The aunt asked the girls questions like where would they buy the fabric and who would make samples of the designs? Those two facts alone had not been considered.

The girls had discussed a bit on the finances. One girl was going to invest her Bat Mitzvah gift money and the other was going to babysit. When the aunt asked what would the parents say if one girls put in more money than the other, the girls decided to hold off on their idea for a bit. If the aunt had not been consulted the girls may have spent unnecessary time and resources trying to develop the idea. Instead, they decided to find out where to get the fabric and who would make the samples.

### **Brainstorming Can Be Helpful in Other Business Situations**

Owning a business without being passionate about it is going to be a challenge sooner or later. This is especially true if you start a business with the idea in mind only to make money without a real passion for the business. The same holds true when someone else convinces you that the purpose of starting your business would be to become famous. If you have a business and realize it is moving away from your passion that can become a real drain on your time and energy as well. Brainstorming with a current advisor or mentor will help in finding a solution. There are always ways to get back in line with your passion.

For example, in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, your parents convince you to start a babysitting service. There is good money in it especially when the job is with two or more children. After a year you need t

to get other girls to help. Although business is thriving it is based on someone else's idea and not on your passion. You have lost interest in it.

Your passion is planning parties and you have done it for several friends and relatives. However, making money at it is a different story as a high school sophomore.

Here's an idea. You have the trust and respect of the parents using your babysitting service. A way to include party planning into your current business is to plan birthday parties for your clients' children. There are other girls working with you that could help with the parties. You are adding your passion while still helping the parents as well as your babysitting crew. On top of it, the kids know you and it would be easy to find out what would make a good party for them. It can now become a business.

### **Follow Your Passion and You'll be Surprised Where it Takes You**

When life's circumstances are just too difficult to take the path you originally envisioned you could take your passion and create a new path.

Take for instance one of your classmates, let's call her Nancy, has a passion for ballet. Nancy wants to become a professional ballet dancer and then a teacher or choreographer. She attends three to four ballet classes weekly. Every December she is in the Nutcracker along with other performances when she is accepted. Nancy regularly attends professional ballet performances and watches ballet videos on YouTube. She knows the stories of all the famous ballet dancers, past and present.

When the cost of the ballet classes increased Nancy's parents could no longer pay for the lessons. In addition, they could not give her money to attend professional performances. Nancy's ballet instructor knows her passion for ballet and understands how important the dance is to her.

The instructor steps in and makes it possible for Nancy to attend the live ballet performances. Attending performances and watching ballet on videos allows Nancy to continue enjoying her passion for ballet.

Recently Nancy's doctor diagnosed her feet and hips are not developed for long-term ballet dancing. After the ballet instructor learned of the doctor's diagnosis she suggested Nancy

consider starting a business centered on her passion for ballet. It would, of course, depend on how creative and committed Nancy would be to it.

There are options Nancy can choose to use her passion for ballet and become a successful young female entrepreneur. She may find her choice could be longer term than a career as a ballet dancer. Some of the ideas for Nancy might be as follows:

- Write a blog to review different ballet performances from a teenager's perspective.
- Videotape interviews with her favorite dancers and post them on YouTube, her blog, and other social media sites.
- Give after-school or Saturday classes to children and teens on how stories were interpreted through ballet.
- Coach a younger girl

~ What kind of entrepreneur will you be?

~ What kind of entrepreneur are you now?

~ What's your passion?

~ What are your ideas for a business that you would like to brainstorm with family, friends, and/or entrepreneurs?

### **Push Your Passion to the Limit and Have the Courage to Follow It**

As you leave this chapter, take a few minutes and draw your passion. If you prefer, write it out. Then consider all the different types of businesses you could start from it.

**It All Matters**  
*You Are the Brand for Your Business*

## ***It All Matters...You Are the Brand for Your Business***

### **Starting Today You are the CEO of Your Life and Business**

We want this chapter to be a guide and inspiration as you develop your personal style and brand. You teach people how to treat you and are the face of your business.

You might want to think about it this way—you are the billboard for your business. Everything matters. Your posts and pictures on social media, your appearance, how you act in and out of school, and how you treat others make a difference. Some of you may already be the face of your business and not even know it. Others may be close to it or have never thought about it. If you already own a business we encourage you to review the points and exercises in this chapter. There may be some new tips to add to your brand toolkit.

It doesn't make any difference what type of business you want to start or have already started. You are the brand you create yourself to be and are in charge of it. The school you attend or a club membership does not define you. Rather than looking at yourself as just a student, a member of club or athletic team, start thinking about what you do that adds value to others. Begin to think of yourself in a different way.

### **Perception vs. Reality**

Many years ago I was told there is no reality, only perception. How others perceive you makes a difference in how they respond to you, promote you and even trust you. This is important to image and branding because you are the face of your business and want an image you define. The success of your business will have a lot to do with the perception others have of you and your brand.

A negative perception of you by others may get in the way of your success for years. I know if you do not take control of an incorrect perception it will give a wrong impression of you. It doesn't mean the perception has to be negative. It means people will think you are different than what you may be

I know if you do not take control of it others will do it for you. You are the voice of your life. It's better for you to have an image that defines your personal brand rather one that someone else defines you.

I have seen mothers try to be the voice of their daughters. Some try to shape the perception people have of their daughters. If your family or friends define you differently than how you want to be defined let them know. You want to create an image that defines your personal brand and shows you to be unique rather than just different. No matter what your personal style is, your personal brand, and business vision, you need to be in control of the perception others have of you.

Many high school and college girls do not think about how they may be perceived by others when their pictures appear in print or online. If a picture appears in a newspaper or magazine, the publication has the right to publish it. The publications don't care how the picture impacts your personal brand and in some cases your business brand. The same is true when high school yearbook or party pictures are posted anonymously online or on social media sites.

### ***Brands are Visual and Your Personal Style is Visual***

Personal style is part of a personal brand. When we write about personal brand it includes personal style. Your personal style is more than the style of dress, hairstyle, makeup, and the car you drive. It doesn't have anything to do with where you shop, the brands you buy, or how much you pay. It represents your lifestyle including how you treat your family members. It also means how you treat people you know or want to know no matter what their lifestyle, culture or race. Everything you do or choose not to do communicates your personal style. As an entrepreneur your style of conducting business is as important as how you dress. When someone says, that's her style it may not mean your style of dress or hair. It can mean how you conduct your business or your attitude. How your social media accounts are handled is directly connected to your personal style in the world today.

Your personal brand is how you want others to see and think about you. It's how you want to be remembered. Is it a brand that communicates value and character or is it one communicating you're not worth following? Your success as an entrepreneur will have a lot to do with the ability of your personal brand to be positive and memorable. Your personal brand needs to fit your personal style and personality. In other words your brand is everything about you.

When you own a business your personal brand will influence how others look at your business brand. Your customer's perception of your connection to your business brand will impact the growth and success of your business. Some of your customers will want to learn more about you before they buy your goods or services. When your brand makes a positive difference to them they will most likely become loyal customers.

You teach people how to treat you through your style. Your appearance and how you present yourself speaks volumes about the image and personal brand you create. Everything you wear or decide not to wear makes a statement about your style. Personal presentation is 55 percent visual (clothing and body language); the tone of voice, pacing, and inflection is 38 percent while words are only five percent.

For example you are very serious about your business yet you show up at school looking like you just fell out of bed. Looking like a slob to attend classes does not make for a positive memorable brand. If a classmate's father or mother has connections to help with your business you would probably want to look your best all of the time. The same might be true with a teacher or school administrator. Even though the trend is to show up for class in a t-shirt and pajama bottoms or a wearing a sweatshirt and tight jeans, that will normally give people a negative or incorrect perception of you. There is a good chance your personal brand will be damaged and it will take time to turn the perception around.

During the first Realizing a Vision conference a celebrity was one of the keynote speakers. Finola Hughes is a well-respected fashion expert as well as a film, stage, and television actress. She shared tips on how to create an image that showed high school girls in the best light. Finola emphasized purchasing a quality jacket or blazer that fits well. It may be more expensive than this year's trendy jackets. It is the one piece of clothing to have as an investment and can be worn for a few years. You will want to wear it for occasions like, meeting influential people, appearing on television, or accepting award. The same holds true if you are interviewing for college admissions or a job you want while you work on your business.

- Wear understated jewelry. Costume jewelry is fine unless you are a jewelry designer. Then you will want your designs to be a big part of your personal style.

- Less is more.
- Your clothes need to fit. When clothes are tailored for your body type you will find yourself wearing them more often.
- Wear colors that look best on you. Trendy colors your friends wear may not be the best colors for you.

Think how you would use these tips in situations listed below.

- What would you wear when you pitch your business to potential investors and perhaps partners?
- How would you present yourself if you were to appear on The Shark Tank in the U.S.? One 17 year old young woman and had a successful jewelry business wore an outfit that was appropriate for pitching her business to prospective investors. The way she used her funky jewelry to accessorize her outfit gave a final touch in showing her as the face of her brand. However the young woman's body language showed a different side of her. She was apparently trying to mimic a successful businesswoman. Instead she looked like a silly high school girl trying to look sophisticated.
- What would you wear promoting your business on a morning talk show?
- What would you wear to appear on a television or YouTube program highlighting teen entrepreneurs?
- What would you wear to give a presentation video taped for your YouTube?

### **Your Social Media and How it Influences the Perception Others Have of You**

You want to get buy-in for whatever you are doing. To maintain a positive brand your social media needs to reflect you in the best light rather than as an unpolished young woman. One of the best ways to do that and get buy-in for whatever you are doing is to refrain from getting caught up in controversial conversations. One fashion designer I know normally used her personal Facebook account to show her new apparel and accessory designs. She used it to introduce her friends to special offers for online sales and from her warehouse. She shared



pictures of her new baby and interesting news. During the 2007 U.S. Presidential election she used her personal Facebook account solely for political purposes. Some of the posts were factual and others were fake news. There were posts that were demeaning and in some cases lies about the candidate and the candidate's family. The designer posted two or three times a day. I commented one time that many of her followers missed the photos and news on her family. We missed seeing posts on her individual clothing designs. The designer didn't read my comment completely and responded her business was just fine. She was exercising her freedom of speech to express her views and if people didn't like her posts they could stop following her.

Many people on Facebook including became tired of the election conversations. However, when the fashion designer answered my comment in the way she did, it showed me a side of her I didn't like. In other words, her style of communicating on Facebook turned me off. It changed my perception of her. She was no longer a person that I wanted to be associated with or promote. I couldn't support anyone who didn't think twice about spreading lies and slandered people just because they were relatives of the candidate.

### **Communication Style is More Than an Attitude**

How your current and potential customers and supporters, and partners look at the content of your social media posts makes a difference.

It is especially important to consider pictures put on your social media platforms. This includes the photos of you your friends tag on their own social media platforms. It doesn't mean you cannot post funny pictures to show your humor, party pictures or those with friends and classmates. It means to watch the subject of the pictures. The best way to do that is to think how your brand will be affected if the photo is shown on TMZ or your local news station. If the photos do not show you in a favorable light don't post them. Unfavorable photographs are less likely to support your entrepreneurial endeavors.

The language used on social media makes a difference as much as photographs. For example, many teenage girls think it is acceptable to use profanity in their posts because adult

women do it. The teens don't realize that those adults may be alienating others without knowing it. Imagine one of your biggest cheerleaders or a potential investor wondering if you would openly use profanity in public, during a business presentation, or onstage during a speaking engagement. That person might be the one who wants to introduce you to someone who would help your vision come to pass. In other words your communication style might jeopardize the perception of you and thus your personal brand.

There may be times when things appear on the Internet people never realized were there in the first place. This includes magazine and newspaper articles written by or about you. There is nothing that can be done to have the pictures or articles removed. I wrote two articles for a health and nutrition magazine that is no longer published. My sister found both articles online when she was researching the subject of the articles. It was a complete surprise to me. I had no idea the magazine had been published online. Luckily the articles were well received by the magazine's readers. The moral of this story is to always think before you write anything that might be published in the future on the Internet.

### **How a Signature Style is Connected to Defining a Brand**

You may want to consider some of the ways successful women decide to define their brands, create their own unique values, and feel comfortable being the face of their businesses.

The Girls' C.E.O. Connection™ Ambassadors videotape interviews with young female entrepreneurs. These interviews placed on YouTube, the blog and all its other social media platforms. Followers often share the interviews on their own social media platforms.

Ten young entrepreneurs were interviewed over a span of two years. Although it was been made clear where the videos would be shown, there were times when some of them were not suitably dressed. Only three out of 10 girls were dressed in a way to show them as the face of their brands. One girl was an award winning fashion designer who was considered a role model for aspiring young female entrepreneurs. She knew exactly what to wear for an interview. During a large entrepreneur conference in Washington D.C., the President of the United States introduced her as perfect example of what teenagers could accomplish as entrepreneurs.

Throughout that year she appeared on stage during major conferences and showed how her personal brand was directly connected to her business brand.

Unfortunately how she dressed for the interview showed her looking like a slob. The interview was filmed in her college room, which was a mess. The entire situation gave the impression the young woman didn't care how she would be perceived. Her story always implied she developed a personal style that created a personal brand she easily connected with her business brand; a polished look, progressive, fun, and imaginative.

It might be fun for you to interview a successful woman entrepreneur to learn how she developed her signature style and created her unique value to define both her personal and business brand. You might consider finding out how comfortable she is being the face of her business. She may even give you some pointers to help you create your signature style and define your brand.

### **All of You Can Be a Brand Worthy of Attention**

Think about the characteristics, qualities or behaviors that set you apart from your peers. Decide what makes you distinctive and what qualities that make you relatable to other people. It may be your sense of humor, compassion and empathy, how you inspire and/or motivate others, or the ability to ignore someone's negative attitude.

You'll probably want to ask your peers how they differentiate you from other friends and classmates. My friends and business associates provided me with excellent feedback. My college sorority sisters considered me an entrepreneur. As an adult I am known as someone who loves to connect people without expecting anything in return. I am recognized for taking something that is excellent and turning it into something extraordinary.

All of you have the chance to stand out. All of you can be a brand worthy of attention. You can do and be anything you want in life as long as you know who you are and what you want to be. It's okay if adjustments need to be made. The better you know yourself and accept you are the CEO of your life and business, the more you will stand out. You will be a brand worthy of attention and you will get it. May I suggest you begin to look, act, and think as a successful young entrepreneur.