

## Thriving as a Female Entrepreneur

Claudine Land:

Hello, friends, and welcome to the Virtual Ingenuity Business Podcast. We have a special digital marketing guest today from New York. She has been working as a digital marketing expert for more than 15 years, and her focus is on web development and redesign and social media strategy, content creation, and blogging. She loves to help businesses and brands navigate our digital world, and she has worked in a variety of industries from news to retail and restaurants. I want you all to welcome Amelia Waters. Amelia, welcome to the Virtual Ingenuity Podcast. How are you today?

Amelia Waters:

Good, how are you?

Claudine Land:

I'm doing great, thank you. I'm so glad to talk with you today. As two girlfriends, we usually do, on this podcast, we're going to talk about navigating life as a female entrepreneur. So, let's dive right in and talk about finding that work-life balance, especially being a woman who juggles so many different things in life, like marriage, kids, work, travel, you name it. I mean, even managing a household. So, Amelia, how do you find that work-life balance or that work-life integration as some may call it?

Amelia Waters:

So, for me, I know over the years I've done a lot of internal work on myself, and that includes mental health. And so, I'm really in tune with my mental health. And if I feel like it's starting to deteriorate in any way, whether I'm just getting moody or ungrateful or just uncomfortable, I usually stop myself and say, "Okay, what's going on? What's happening in my life?" And that's when I know, okay, time to take a day off, time to go out and play, see some friends, go hiking, and do something for me that makes me enjoy life. I am single with no kids, so that is not something I don't have to worry about. But as a single woman, all I have is me. I don't have a second income. And so, between running the business as an entrepreneur and then my side hustle as a personal trainer, I'm really an entrepreneur, which means I'm an employee, but I'm really an entrepreneur within that business.

It's like a real estate agent. It's really up to me to gain clients and keep them. And I'm 100% commissioned at the gym, which I love, love my job. So, balancing those two things, I work very hard. I work very hard. And I make sure that I have my time off, that I can enjoy life with my two little kitties that I adore, and see my family. And it's beautiful here in upstate New York in the fall, the colors are gorgeous. Go for a hike in the Adirondacks, Catskills. But I would say work-life balance is a mental health thing for me, because if I don't have my mental health, if I don't have my feet on the ground, I don't have anything.

Claudine Land:

That's right. And it's so important for us to have our career and life goals in alignment. I see folks, and I've talked about this before on the podcast, with two different calendars. They have a work calendar

and then they have a personal calendar. And I think, what in the world are you doing? You have to have one calendar because you only have one life. So, it is a balancing act and it does become increasingly difficult as the demands of balancing your private life and your work life. But we can balance that out, we just have to know how to, and we have to have that flexible work schedule as well. And I know that since COVID, a lot of people are working from home. And sometimes even working from home folks find it even more challenging to balance that business and personal life. So, we have to just dig deep and find out how to do that within ourselves.

Amelia Waters:

Agreed.

Claudine Land:

And just figure out what it takes to make us focus. And then on the flip side, take those five to 10 extra minutes during the day to take a break from work and focus on, as you said, Amelia, our mental well-being as well.

Amelia Waters:

Absolutely.

Claudine Land:

Yeah. So, why is finding that work-life balance so important? We hear all the time, that we have to have this work-life balance. Me being in healthcare, it's wonderful for your health. I take a break, I go bike riding for maybe an hour, 30 minutes every afternoon. So, let's talk about that a little bit, why it's so important health-wise.

Amelia Waters:

So, I think for your overall health, I think it's become more... And speaking of the healthcare system, I think stress has become a huge factor that doctors ask, how stressed are you? I've gone through some health things, nothing serious, but that's one of the first questions my doctor asks, "How are your stress levels?" And sometimes our bodies tell us if we're stressed before our minds do. And so, that's always interesting too. As a personal trainer, I'm very in tune with my body. I listen to it all the time. If I'm doing an exercise and my body's like, "Yeah, we're not doing this today." I say, "Okay, no problem." Actually, in August, I had my most successful month ever, but I crashed. I got very stressed out and my body's like, "You're going to take a night off, because if you don't take a night off, we're going to force you to take a night off."

Claudine Land:

That's right.

Amelia Waters:

And so, I did. I canceled my gym clients and I said, I need to just take a night, veg out, watch some TV, watch some True Crime that we all like to watch now, which some people might not consider relaxing, but I enjoy it.

Claudine Land:

But again, you have to find what it takes for you to relax. And for you, that's what it is.

Amelia Waters:

Exactly. And sometimes even as an athlete, I'm like, nope, I just need to rest. I just need to relax, watch a movie, and rest. Because as I said, my mom always said, If you don't have your health, you don't have anything. But I think for me, if I don't have my mental health, I don't have anything, because it affects my body, it affects my mood, and it affects my engagement with others. So, my mental health, as I said, is number one.

Claudine Land:

And nowadays, mental health has been brought to the forefront. And I find it interesting that it's that way now, when all the while, I mean we knew. Well, I shouldn't say that, but doctors knew that mental health is what drives us, good mental health or bad mental health. But it's so important to have that good mental health, but it's just amazing now that it's come to the forefront when it's been there all this time. And I'm so glad now actually that celebrities are using their platform to speak out on having good mental health too.

Amelia Waters:

Yeah. I mean, one of my favorite authors, Gabby Bernstein, says, "You have to slow down to speed up."

Claudine Land:

That's right.

Amelia Waters:

And I'm like, you know what? That's a good point. Because when I slow down, that's when my creative juices are flowing and I can be more of a service to my clients. If I'm go, go, go, go, go, go, I don't give a chance for my creative energy to spur.

Claudine Land:

That's right. And then you also bring that stress to your clients too, which is not what you want. So, we feed off each other. So, if you're calm, more than likely your client's going to learn to be calm as well.

Amelia Waters:

Exactly.

Claudine Land:

Yes. So, let's talk about the struggles between females and males, especially in business, because I think that we struggle a little bit differently. Hopefully, we won't get in trouble for this. But do you think, Amelia, that men and women differ entrepreneurially? And after we talk a little bit, I'm going to share some data on statistics that I found about this too.

Amelia Waters:

I think so. I think there are pros and cons I think to both. I think there's a lot of information that women make less. And I wish we would stop reading all that because then we kind of ingrain it in ourselves, well, I don't make as much as a man. And I know some men who struggle with asking for the right prices too, especially when you're new. I think the good news is as a woman, we're more approachable. I think we're more conversational. I think our emotional intelligence is a little bit better than men's, which is very important when it comes to sales and recruiting new clients, talking to potential clients and leads.

Men, I think can be... I'm probably not good at understanding everything that goes through a man's mind, but I think right now there's some stigma towards men too. And not all men, until you prove otherwise. But I know some great men who actually are life and business coaches and are good guys. And actually, I brought up the topic of men versus women, because sometimes as a woman, an outspoken woman, the world is not always in your corner. And I had an incident last spring where I got really disrespected by a networking group because I spoke up about one of their peers. And that is something that women have to face, unfortunately, when you speak up about an abuser or something like that. And it was a pretty tough situation, but it made me stronger. It definitely says something more about them than me.

But as a woman, I never expected to have things happen the way they did. I didn't go into it to be a whistleblower or a watchdog. I just said, look, this man's making me uncomfortable. So, unfortunately, as women, I think we can be subject to harassment, but then when we speak up about it, and men go through this too. But I guess I'm just speaking from my point of view. Sometimes as a woman, I do feel like men want to chat with me when they have, I guess an agenda. I've had to be better as a female entrepreneur. I've gotten better at sniffing those out when they have an agenda. "Oh, let's meet for coffee. What do you want to talk about? What exactly do you want to talk about?" So, I'm better at weeding that out.

And I think sometimes as a strong woman, I feel like there are a lot of other men who, I don't know, want to make me look stupid in front of other people. And so, sometimes I really have to stand my ground. And I've known other female entrepreneurs who've had to do that too. That's something, as a woman, I face. But I also think, because I rebranded in the spring, or I rebranded and I think that's helped. I went from Double Paws Digital, which was like animal paws, because I have two cats, to Dual Strength Strategies. And I think renaming, it's much stronger. It's much more serious. It's not as cute. So, I think that's made a difference as well.

Claudine Land:

Yes. You brought up several great points, Amelia. Women I feel are definitely more emotionally driven. That's one of the differences that I personally have seen. And a lot of these studies have shown, is that women lead by emotion. That could be good or bad. But I think that women also are in tune with our intuition. And so, in business, we can basically sniff out a client that maybe we should not deal with, we should not have as a client. And then I want to bring up some of these... I was reading some information about a study about how men and women differ entrepreneurially. And there was a study, an article, Are Male and Female Entrepreneurs That Different by Erin Kepler and Scott Shane several years ago. And they really took a deep comparison between female and male entrepreneurs. And they found that we are different, men and women are different, but not where we would expect.

And what they looked at was what made them entrepreneurial. That was the very first thing. And they did what they call an e-scan test. It's a research-based scan that you can compare yourself with other entrepreneurs, to see how you score on essential competencies as an entrepreneur. And so they found differences, but it really wasn't enough to call it significant. So, I found that interesting. And the general idea is that men have more guts and dare to take more risks, but women do business differently, not necessarily better. So, I think just what you brought up, it's just more emotional. And so, we may approach business from maybe a less aggressive standpoint than maybe a man would. Now, we're just as capable of taking more risks as men, but do we? We may choose not to do that. And so, the study found that women are more likely to prefer lower risk or return on business.

So, I found that interesting. And I could see that. Another thing is that they scored equally as creative in the mindset, men and women did, which I found surprising that they're equally creative. I think maybe women use our creativity more than men do.

Amelia Waters:

Yeah, I think so. I know like social media, there are a lot more women than men who do social media.

Claudine Land:

I think that's right. That is true, yes. And then another difference between men and women is that entrepreneurial men and women that are in high-technology incubators, they both love technology. But men show more leadership if that makes more sense. I don't know if I agree with that.

Amelia Waters:

I don't agree with that either.

Claudine Land:

Yeah, I don't know. I think that men may have a different stance...I don't think that I agree with that one.

Amelia Waters:

No, I don't agree either.

Claudine Land:

Maybe others feel intimidated because it's a man versus it being a woman - if you see a man and a woman in a room. Women are more likely to set specific self-goal-setting standards. We have more to-do lists, which I believe, is because we of course juggle many things. So, we are more focused on what we need to do for the day because we're juggling more things

Amelia Waters:

Yeah. And what I think too is we're more about the manifestation rituals and all that. I think we're more about putting visual boards together and vision boards, writing down our goals, and doing the work. I've done a lot of workbook goals and kind of manifesting techniques, visualizations, where men, I feel like a little bit more resistant to that kind of stuff. Yeah, definitely.

Claudine Land:

Yeah. I can see that as well. Okay. So, how can women strengthen their advantage in a business position over their male counterparts? How do you think we can do that?

Amelia Waters:

I think one, and this is something that I've had to learn too, is this might just be me personally, but I've had to toughen up a little bit in some ways. As I said, I think women, can be more emotional, but I think to a certain degree, think more like a man. And I've had to work at not taking things so personally, both personally and professionally. Other people's behavior is a reflection of their decisions. Or if I'm rejected by something, you know what? That's more about them than it is about me.

Claudine Land:

That's right.

Amelia Waters:

And if a certain client decides not to go with me, or a potential client or whatever reason, I think I've tried to incorporate that masculine mindset of, okay, fine, I'm just going to move on. I'm not going to dwell on it. I'm not going to overthink it, just let it go.

Claudine Land:

Yeah. And I think that women learn from, I don't want to say mistakes, but women learn from everything that we do. And I did a podcast a couple of podcasts ago about that. And someone said, "It's important to learn.... I'm going to get it right, "Learn what you go through to grow through."

Amelia Waters:

Oh, grow through what you go through.

Claudine Land:

You grow through what you go through. Thank you.

Amelia Waters:

Yes, yes. I love that one. Yep.

Claudine Land:

I do too. It's one of my very favorites. So, I think that women do that really well.

Amelia Waters:

I think, as I said, that first year in business, talk about growth spurt, talk about a lot of painful lessons in growth spurts. And I'm like, oh, this is her. This is painful. I look back at where I was a year ago and I'm like, wow. I actually did some reflection before I hopped on with you today and I was like looking in that rearview mirror. I'm like, I'm in a much better place today than I was a year ago. It's so different. Because sometimes I'm like, I'm not where I want to be yet. But I'm like, look where I came from.

Claudine Land:

And Amelia, as you said, women, we have our vision board so we can look back at all the things that we've accomplished. And I tell that to my clients too, that it's so important to have that [vision board]. Because especially some of those times when we're down, we can look back and say, we're not where we want to be but look at where we've come from. It's so easy to forget that. And I think men and women have different motivations. Another study was done and it shows that there are no fundamental differences in support between men and women. That men and women don't prepare for the launch of their business in the same way. Which again, is what we touched on. I think we're just more emotionally driven. Also, it says that women, rely more on themselves. So, we're more solo entrepreneurs, which I strongly believe.

Amelia Waters:

Yes, I heard that too.

Claudine Land:

Yeah. We don't have partners because we learn to rely on ourselves. So, that's pretty interesting. We're also a little bit more confident in the success of our company. So, are there any advantages, Amelia, you think as a women-owned business?

Amelia Waters:

Oh, yeah. I think I look out for grants because some grants honor minority and women-owned. I can label myself on Google as a woman-owned. I can definitely get some more support, I think more community support, sometimes more fundraising. I think there is that extra support and acknowledgment when you are a woman or minority-owned or LGBTQ-owned that I can put out, like

yeah, I'm a solo woman business owner. And I think people are like, oh, wow. I feel like sometimes we almost get more accredited than men in some ways. Because I think men being out on their own, I think that's old news, but it's still kind of cool to see a woman out on her own. And so, at least I think it is. So, there's that. I think there is definitely an advantage. And as I said, as a woman, I think I'm more approachable. I think I'm more conversational. And I think, as I said, I think my EQ is pretty good. I've taken tests and I do actually have a high emotional intelligence.

Claudine Land:

Right. Tell us a little bit more, Amelia, about your business.

Amelia Waters:

Sure. So, I have been doing websites, and social media, I'm going to date myself here, probably since the MySpace days, so the 2000s. I've always loved it. I've always been tech-savvy. I don't quite remember this, but my mom says, I showed her the computer when I was nine. So, I've always been a computer tech person. And take after my dad's side of the family, were techies. So, I consider myself a creative techie because I love working with colors and aesthetics, but I also have that coding and kind of that technical background as well. So, I've been doing this stuff. My technical abilities, helped me get into my first career, which was in TV news. I was able to build my own website as a potential reporter. So, I ended up getting my first job out in mid-Missouri for a CBS affiliate. I was out there for two and a half years, so I survived the oh 08/09 recession out there. Yeah, I survived.

Claudine Land:

That was huge.

Amelia Waters:

It was huge. And your first job in news, I was making like 20 a year, really little. But it's what brought me to Albany, New York. So, my technical skills helped me get my second job when I moved up to a bigger market, Albany, New York. And I was the website manager, 11:00 PM producer there. And then after TV, I decided to really pursue internet marketing full-time. I could tell it was more of a passion. I loved it more. I worked for an internet marketing company for about two years. And then I went through some kind of life changes. I kind of did it on the side while I worked in some retail and restaurant jobs.

And then right before the shutdown, I did a lot of marketing for some non-profits. I was a personal trainer at my local YMCA and I worked full-time for the Girl Scouts. Did a lot of email marketing, and membership recruiter was my title. So, it was my job to start troops, and I loved it. It was a very fun job. And then the pandemic pushed me to start my own business. It just was something I'd been wanting to do for years. I was too scared to do it. And I finally thought I was like, "You know what? I'm going to do it. I'm going to go for it." And so, I filed my LLC and here I am a year and a half later.

Claudine Land:

Amelia, so what does your process look like when you identify a client?

Amelia Waters:

So, a big thing when I find a client is someone who says, "I need this, I just don't have time to do it myself." That's a big one. Because when you're running your own store, your own cake shop, whatever it is, your own business, or construction, the last thing you want to think about is your website and your social media. And so, that's where I step in. And I help companies get established online because your website is your hub. It's where people learn about you, can make appointments, pay invoices, everything. Everything's on your website now.

And so, I think the pandemic really kicked a lot of businesses in the face that didn't have a strong web presence. I think they realized, "Oh, my God." And so people like me, there's a lot of people like me, there's a lot of web developers, social media people out there, but I acknowledge that, that's okay. I just keep doing what I'm doing and know that there's no one out there just like me, and I just keep going. I acknowledge the competition, but I don't dwell on it. And I have a passion for this stuff, I always have. So, I think the right client sometimes finds me too.

Claudine Land:

Right. I strongly believe in that.

Amelia Waters:

And then as you gain your community, it becomes easier to find those clients. Because when people know you, they're like, "You know what? Amelia would be perfect for you."

Claudine Land:

Yeah. So, if our listeners could have one takeaway from what we talked about today, what would that takeaway be for you?

Amelia Waters:

I would love for people to know that no matter what you do in this life, whether you work a 9:00 to 5:00, or whether you're an entrepreneur, to enjoy life. Your job is not your identity. And I feel like in the United States, especially we're workaholics. And I've met people who retire and they have no idea who they are, and I don't want to be that. And I think that's why we're hearing so much about quiet quitting, is that I think more and more people are like, "You know what? This isn't how I want to spend my life in a gray cubicle from 9:00 to 5:00." And so, I think if there's one takeaway, find what you love to do and do it. Just find what you love to do. And the money won't always come immediately, but when you find who you are, nothing really stops you. And I think just that's a really strong statement.

Claudine Land:

It really is. So, where can my listening audience find you in case they want to get in touch with you?

Amelia Waters:

Sure. Yeah. It's [dualstrengthstrategies.com](https://dualstrengthstrategies.com). I have Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. I don't have a TikTok yet, I need to get there. I just got a new phone. Somebody else will shoot more videos. Dualstrengthstrategies.com is my website. It's actually still in the making, but you can still contact me there. And then I'll course them on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Claudine Land:

Fantastic. Amelia, so let's end with this. What is the one piece of advice that you wish someone had given you when starting your business?

Amelia Waters:

I wish someone had told me that the first year is like 80% sales. Because I didn't even realize I was thinking this way, but I was like, I love what I do and I'm just going to make websites and do social media. And then I was like, oh, crap, I got to find the clients.

Claudine Land:

Yes.

Amelia Waters:

I had a little bit of it and I realized, I'm like, this is like 80% sales. And I've always avoided sales because I think sales can have a bad rap, but when you do it right... As a personal trainer, I'm doing sales, there are sales everywhere.

Claudine Land:

Everywhere.

Amelia Waters:

You got to do it right.

Claudine Land:

That's right.

Amelia Waters:

You got to do it right. And so, I had a huge, huge lesson that first year. I was like, oh, my God, this is a lot of networking. You just got to that first year in business, network, network, network. Just keep getting out there and getting in front of people, introducing yourself, because you just got to get out there. And I wish I had done that a little bit better than I did my first year.

Claudine Land:

Yes. And network and follow up. They're people that network, Amelia, but they don't follow up and so they get lost. You forget who they are.

Amelia Waters:

Yes. What I would do is I would collect business cards if I went to an event and I would wait. I'd like to do it within 24 hours, but usually within a couple of days I emailed every single person and I said, It was so nice meeting you, can we meet for coffee? I always followed up. And that's something I learned a while ago, was you've got to always follow up with people. You can't just grab their card and take off.

Claudine Land:

That's right. I'll get the person's card if it's in person, but I'll say, okay, so now what's the best way to contact you? Because then at least I have their information and I'm really the one in control of contacting them if they forget to contact me. And so, if you're doing a virtual event, because you and I work across time zones, personal notes are great. I will drop a personal note to somebody in a heartbeat. I think that's so important and I think it's a lost art. Some people have trouble picking up the phone to call and follow up, much less sending a personal note. So, I think those two things are really important as well.

Amelia, I want to thank you so much for being a part of the Virtual Ingenuity Business Podcast today. I enjoy talking with you about Dual Strength Strategies.

Amelia Waters:

Thank you.

Claudine Land:

My listening audience, please remember to contact Amelia through <https://dualstrengthstrategies.com/> She has awesome, awesome reels on Instagram. She's fantastic at social media, cannot stress it enough. So, make sure you all contact her. Again, Amelia, thank you so much for joining us on the Virtual Ingenuity Business Podcast today. You can listen to more of the Virtual Ingenuity Business Podcast on Apple Podcast and Spotify.

My friends, until next time... let's impact together. Have a great day.

Amelia Waters:

Thank you.