

Miss Heard

m a g a z i n e

Girls and Business

Mini Issue

Zandra Beauty

**Products for Girls
by a Girl**



Gabrielle Jordan
Entrepreneur, Author,
Speaker

Essynce Couture
Unique Clothes for Teens

Letter from the Editor



Hello!

We're so glad you found us. Thank you for checking out MissHeard Magazine's first free mini issue! This year, we'll be releasing three more mini issues in addition to our regular subscriber content, so stay tuned!

If you have never read MissHeard Magazine, here's the scoop:

1. MissHeard is for girls, by girls and women. Stories found in MissHeard are the real-life stories of real-life girls, in their own words.
2. We're submissions-based and encourage YOU to submit your story, art, or poetry. Your story matters!
3. MissHeard is a community of support and love. We're proud of our writers, Teen Advisors, and bloggers!

Our first mini issue focuses on amazing woman and girl entrepreneurs. Why? Because women-owned businesses make up [nearly 30%](#) of all businesses! Women are key innovators and entrepreneurs. Owning a business can be a path to financial independence and to community change.

In this mini issue, we share the stories of girls and women who are taking their futures into their own hands. These inspirational girls and women show that owning a business is possible at any age.

If you'd like to highlight a girl-preneur, drop us a line on Twitter [@MissHeardMag](#) or email us at submissions@missheardmagazine.com. She may be featured on our blog or in a future issue!

If you're a girl or women involved in STEM, the arts and/or politics, we'd love to hear from you for our upcoming mini issues.

Thank you for reading! We hope you love it.

Lindsey

Female Entrepreneurs in History



Madam CJ Walker, 1867-1919

Sarah Breedlove, better known as Madam CJ Walker, was one of the first Black women to become a self-made millionaire. Walker invented a line of hair care and cosmetic products that addressed the specific beauty needs of Black women. Trained by beauty entrepreneur Annie Turnbo Malone, Walker traveled the country giving demonstrations and training sales agents, empowering Black women throughout the country.

Learn more about Madam CJ Walker at from [Biography.com](#) and at [PBS.org](#).



Olive Ann Mellor Beach 1903-1993

Olive Beech loved numbers from an early age. By age seven she had a bank account, and as a child she managed her family's accounts. After attending business school, she worked as a bookkeeper for Travel Air Manufacturing Company. There, Beech learned the ins and outs of building a business from the ground up. She also met her husband, Walter Beech. During World War II, Walter fell ill and Olive took over the growing business. Olive became president after Walter's death. During her 20 year presidency, sales tripled.

Learn more about Olive Ann Mellor Beach at [KHF](#).

Businesses and Entrepreneurs to Watch

Here are just a few of our favorite trail-blazing, business-running super women.



Diamonds and Coal pieces are handmade by Erin Joy. Her jewelry blends edgy pieces with traditional glamour. You can see pieces in the making on [Facebook!](#)



Kim Dylla (photo by Steven Ernst) owns [Kylla Custom Rockwear](#). She makes one of a kind outfits for rockstars and recently launched a ready-to-wear line. There's nothing Kim Dylla can't do, as evidenced by our interview in the [role models issue](#).



Tavi Gevinson got her start writing [Style Rookie](#), a fashion blog. At the age of 15, she founded her current site, [Rookie](#), which is mostly written by teens. Tavi has given TEDx Talks and appeared on the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list. Lately, Tavi has been acting as well. You can [Tweet with Tavi](#).



Lily Herman co-founded [The Prospect](#), a lifestyle and college admissions website. Lily is also a college student, [USA Today college columnist](#), a [HerCampus](#) editor and editor at [HelloFlo](#). [Tweet with Lily](#).



Jess Ekstorm founded [Headbands of Hope](#). For each headband she sells, she donates a headband to a girl with cancer and donate \$1 to a charity of the buyers choice. She's donated over 25,000 headbands so far! [Follow her journey](#).

Windsor Western, Stephanie Lewis and Annie Wang founded [Her Campus](#) when they were undergrads at Harvard College. Currently Her Campus is the biggest global community for collegiates with 5,000+ contributors and 250+ campus chapters. Her Campus offers blogger networks, ambassador programs, conferences and more!

Sarah Folts

The Butterfly Babe

At the age of 14 I developed a blood disorder, which I still have to this day, which became very severe and I ended up having double amputations on both my feet and a multitude of various other surgeries. I became very unhappy and depressed with my life; spending a lot of time outdoors to keep my mind away from negative thought. I began collecting butterfly wings that I found and started creating jewelry with them. Because of what I had been through, coming so close to losing my life, I developed a great appreciation for nature, seeing the beauty in things that I had previously overlooked. Overtime my hobby grew, giving me great happiness and joy, to what it is today.

I've been teaching myself entomology, learning everything I can about butterflies and other creatures. so far I've been featured at the University of Maryland and I'm being featured at the Bruce Museum in CT this April. All the specimens I collect for my work are purchased from insect sanctuaries and various breeders and the creature has lived a life and naturally passed away. Most butterflies only live for two weeks in adult form. Moths, one week as they do not eat or drink.

A lot of "insect" artists get their insects net-caught from their natural habitat, and killed, or they acquire them from "insect farms" that kill the specimens in A1 condition (undamaged) right after they hatch for personal profit.

Because I am disabled I do not work a "real" job. ButterflyBabe is my full-time job, the profit made from my art goes back into supporting Sanctuaries or sustaining a "normal" life and paying for my medical treatments. There isn't a second of the day when I'm not dealing with my medical endeavors or working with bugs. It's a lot of work and it isn't easy. it's taken 10 years to get to a position where the money coming in from the business can sustain ButterflyBabe and myself. I don't think I could have made it happen if my family had not been so helpful or supportive with my goals.

I've also been told many a time, that what I'm doing isn't going to give me the money I need to live or grow my business. But, when there is a will there is a way and if you have enough drive, anything is possible.

The Butterfly Babe
Sarah Folts



Learn more about Sarah, the Butterfly Babe at: www.thebutterflybabe.com

Check out more of Sarah's creations at: www.etsy.com/shop/TheButterflyBabe



Discover what you love and don't let fear stop you

by Melanie Padgett Powers

Owner, MelEdits



@MelEdits

You can see everything Mel does at her site: www.meledits.com.

Have questions? You can Tweet with Mel too [@meledits](https://twitter.com/meledits).

I've been a writer and a bookworm for as long as I can remember. In the sixth grade, I started a class newspaper and won a young authors contest. As a high school freshman, I applied for and was accepted onto the school newspaper staff. I knew at age 14 that I wanted to be a journalist—I know most kids are not that lucky!—but I would never have guessed in a million years that at age 40 I would start my own writing, editing and social media business.

I started my own business because I was frustrated with my job and my new boss. But the job ads I looked at didn't sound interesting. I wanted to use my creativity every day and help educate people. I wanted to look forward to going to work again. And I started dreaming about working from home and not having a boss anymore. So, with a little money saved in the bank, I quit my job and started MelEdits. It was already my Twitter handle, and I had a nice following, so I stuck with that name. Plus, I'd been an editor for a long time, and I was passionate about helping fix grammatical mistakes and improve writers' work. Through MelEdits, I am able to work in the three primary areas I love: writing (magazine and newsletter articles, blog posts, website content), editing (mostly copy editing magazines) and social media (helping small businesses and nonprofits use social media to find new customers or educate their supporters).

The biggest rewards are what I had already dreamed of: feeling passionate and creative about my work, being my own boss, working from home and setting my own hours. But this doesn't mean it's easy. I've worked more hours and harder than I ever have before. It's challenging when there is no one else to make the decisions and no one else to doublecheck your ideas. And I don't receive a steady paycheck; I always need to be thinking of how much money I need to earn to pay my bills.

No matter what you decide to do, I encourage you to follow the advice my parents instilled in me growing up: Always stick up for yourself. Always believe in yourself, even when others don't. And don't let fear stop you.

Go for things that you're scared of or intimidated by: that big internship, the dream college across the country, the opportunity to study abroad or take a European backpacking trip by yourself. You won't get everything you want, and you won't always win—but it really is true that failure can make you stronger, smarter and more determined. Work hard and go for it!

Confessions of a Teen CEO

by Julia Schemmer

“WHAT!?! You’re seventeen?” is a reaction that I hear a lot, especially when proposing a new strategic business partnership with my magazine, [She Speaks Media](#), or developing initiatives for my organization, [The Face of Cancer](#). I understand where they’re coming from – at seventeen, most people don’t think about owning a business, writing hundreds of emails a day, or interviewing people. However, my passion for journalism was realized during my junior year of high school, and I knew it was time for me to chase after it: Julia Darling style.

A typical day for me involves going to school (I still attend public school, where I participate in AP classes, am president of the Female Empowerment Club, and co-captain of the Mock Trial defense team) from 6:30 AM-3:15 PM. Of course, I don’t just walk out of bed and go to school – I usually begin my day with a cup of iced coffee, One Direction music, and of course, hugs from my puppy! After finally getting the perfect eyeliner line and striving for a Pinterest-worthy outfit, I head out the door with my freshman brother, Coby.

After school, I either a) fall asleep until dinner or b) begin work on homework, reply to emails, conduct calls with celebrity managers, or interview different celebrities. (The latter makes me seem like a much more productive person). After family dinner, which my family is insistent in keeping this tradition no matter how busy we are, I write anywhere from five to twelve articles, send business proposals, interview requests, and sponsorship inquiries, and get ready for the day ahead.

I consider myself extremely blessed to do what I love every day. Starting She Speaks Media Enterprises and The Face of Cancer have been dreams of mine, and working as an executive at Her Culture Magazine, all seem like a figment of my imagination. While at times my life is insanely busy, I am so thankful for the adventure that I’ve been wanting since I was a little girl.

If you’re a teen wanting to start a business, do it! It’s going to take time, planning, and dedication, but I promise it’ll all be worth it. Don’t look for others to validate your idea, but pursue your dream even when others cannot see the greatness of your vision.

Ultimately, your success is dependent on whether you’re going to listen to the approval of others. If you find yourself constantly making excuses, justifying your lowered expectations, and putting off your dream, then you’ll find yourself unhappy. Darlings, you were made for a life of adventure, passion, and unsolicited joy. I’m living proof of the possibilities that arise once you say yes to the life you’ve imagined, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.



You can check out Julia’s amazing work at sites like:

www.missheardmag.com
www.herculture.org
[She Speaks Media](#)
[The Face of Cancer](#)
[Huffington Post Teen](#)

She Speaks
MEDIA ENTERPRISES

[Julia is on Twitter and she’d love to tweet with you!](#)

Chatting with Analog owners Lisa and Melissa



Lisa at the Analog storefront

Lisa: Analog is a little shop that we tend to call a “nostalgic’s paradise.” We carry vintage clothing and accessories, along with paper products that are either vintage (old postcards, cookbooks) or hand-made (greeting cards and prints).

Melissa and I had been running our individual businesses — hers doing paper and mine doing vintage — for several

years before we joined forces. Having an online shop and selling at outdoor markets are great options for businesses that are just starting, but both of our homes were drowning in supplies and products. We needed to grow.

Melissa: We also were both neighbors at a lot of local weekend fairs and pop-up markets and found that the same shoppers would pore over both our spaces. We realized we had a lot of overlap in customers.

Lisa: An opportunity arose to apply for an art studio in a really cute neighborhood that was in the process of having a lot of cool new stuff added to it: coffee shops, local eateries, a performance space. Melissa came to me to see if we wanted to join forces for a brick-and-mortar location that allowed us both to work on our businesses while not having to schlep merchandise to markets each weekend.

Lisa: The best part about having two owners in our space is that you’re never alone in the struggles and the triumphs. We’re great at managing a schedule so that neither of us get too overworked, and it’s been great having each other around to brainstorm and work on DIY projects.

But it is not easy to bring together two business owners in a joint venture. For anyone thinking about doing the same, I recommend keeping detailed notes from meetings and conversations. Have a contract together — it doesn’t need to be fancy or long — and refer to it often to make sure everyone’s meeting their obligations. If everything you originally agreed to is on a paper that you can take out and check, it’s easier to make sure tasks get done without having to nag.

Melissa: The notes thing is especially important when one of you is bad at remembering things that were agreed upon if they’re not written down in a place where you can easily re-access them. (Thanks, Lisa!)

It’s also good because if the early riser gets to the office before you, she’s already started a pot of coffee. (Thanks, Lisa!)

Lisa: Every day is wildly different. I’m a freelance writer and consultant when I’m not at the shop, so I might be meeting with a client, working on an article, doing phone interviews with sources, or snoozing on the couch with my cat. When I’m on duty at the shop, I usually have a long list of tasks I’d love to complete in between customers. We have shorter hours in the winter, so lately I’ve been keeping my eye on the clock to see how much I can get done during a shift. Can I dust, sweep, clean the window, put out new jewelry, photograph items for Etsy and measure them, and mend a few pieces of clothing? Sometimes I can. But those days are rare.

Melissa: I have never been good at having a set routine, so owning a business is a great way to avoid that since I am never doing the same thing two days in a row. If I am at Analog for the day, I am probably testing out new products or researching ideas in the back of the studio when I am not running the day-to-day bits up front. If Lisa is scheduled at Analog, I am likely to be found somewhere in a cycle of sleeping in, tweaking new designs, planning workshops for Analog and the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, and emailing clients at 3:30 in the morning.

Lisa: The biggest reward is definitely watching someone find the perfect vintage piece that they love so much they want to wear it out of the store. Fitting vintage is tricky, and it’s almost like a Cinderella experience when customers try on clothing. But when it works, it really works, and I love seeing customers that happy.

The biggest challenges usually have to do with paperwork. Last year it was really, really cold in DC, and our heating bill was outrageous. There may have been some tears. We’ve also had to tolerate a lot of construction around our studio due to the new developments in progress.

Melissa: I will second that the rewards come from customers. It’s so great when people come in and are excited about something I made, and I can tell them I made it and we can chat about a memory it sparks for them,

continued on next page

Shop Analog continued

or how they were worried they were the only one who still sent physical mail.

Challenges are definitely in the paperwork department. It's a lot to keep on top of, and I don't know a single person who is now working as an artist who majored in bookkeeping.

Lisa: The process of interviewing and signing all the paperwork [to open the storefront] took about five months. Once we had the keys in our hands, we had about three weeks to get the storefront up and running. I had a half-time job at the time, so I would work 20 hours each week and then another 40-50 in the shop as we prepared to launch. We ate a lot of fast food. We also have a lot of amazing friends who offered their time and help.

Melissa: To be fair, we paid them in fast food. And we Tom Sawyered it and let them paint stuff. Our benevolence is unrivaled.

Lisa: [An entrepreneur needs] A sense of organization (so you don't get lost in all your paperwork and product). A patient nose for research (because sometimes when you have a question or issue, it takes days to wade through the red tape world of regulations and business licensing). And you don't have to be an extrovert, but it helps to be comfortable talking to strangers one on one. You'll meet a lot of people, especially if you open a physical location for your business.

Melissa: You also have to have a lot of confidence in what you're doing or making to help you get through your doubting days. Plus, confidence that you are good at what you're doing will show through to your clients.

Lisa: [If more girls owned their own businesses] we would all have so many options of where to shop, eat, and spend our hard-earned dollars! I have come to know such a strong, supportive, and generally awesome network of women who have started businesses or work for themselves. I can only hope today's girls who want to be entrepreneurs easily find themselves with similar support circles!

Melissa: If we all worked for ourselves, I like to think we'd

actually value women's time more highly than our society currently does. Women entrepreneurs are constantly expected to not only manage a successful business (but without being too demanding because that's not ladylike), but also donate their services or products to anyone who asks (and be thought of as a bitch if we can't), plus all the other ridiculous expectations we have for women that no man seems to be held to. And we all do it to ourselves, too. But if we all owned a business instead, maybe we would cut each other a little more slack in general since we would understand where we were all coming from and that everyone has demands on them from one corner or another, and we'd all be happier for it.

You know, that could probably be relevant for all people in general, and not just if we were all business owners. Be nice to each other, is what I think I'm saying here.

Lisa: [I'd tell someone starting their own business that] baby steps are great and not at all embarrassing. You don't need a huge launch to get started.

Melissa: Don't be afraid to mess up. And don't be afraid to start a step over or retreat a little to come at something from a different angle. I can promise you that you will make missteps because you cannot possibly be an expert in every aspect of owning a business. If you chat with other business owners, be honest about your challenges and see where it leads. I've seen really great collaborations come of two people working together on some things they both are only OK at alone.



Melissa setting up Analog



Lisa and Melissa own Analog. Check out their [website](#), Tweet with [the shop](#), [Lisa](#) and [Melissa](#) or visit them in person at 716 Monroe St NE, Studio 5 in Washington DC!



Enrica Bruno, Patent Attorney

I was supposed to marry a lawyer, not be one. It's not that anyone ever told me that explicitly, but it was implied in conversations, interactions, and exchanges about me and my future when I was a kid.

Many years after the fact – and time spent on two continents – I now believe that this experience is not limited to my family and country of origin (Italy). On the contrary, I believe that every woman has to face the inescapable fact that, in various ways and forms, the society where she lives ultimately defines her based on whether or not a man will choose to marry her.

A girl faces a lot of pressure growing up. It's not only that what denies you is out of your control, but in people's minds, you are also supposed to be passive about and accept it. You are not supposed to choose but ultimately to be chosen, which leaves you with only one option: being likable.

Being likable – that is, being pretty and acceptable by others – is hard enough for a girl even if she is a perfect fit, so to speak, for her society, but for an independent (and at the time slightly overweight) thinker such as myself, it was a real challenge.

I loved reading and learning about new things (yes, I was a total nerd). I also loved sports, even if they were not necessarily the ones I was supposed to love (fencing was one of my faves). I had a natural inclination for elaboration and argument (my classroom discussions became real battlefields), and I dreamt about big things. As this was not exactly the norm where I grew up, I found myself at many a crossroads having to decide between who I really was and being likable.

Those decisions are what really defined me, and I believe that your crossroads and your decisions should ultimately define you.

Despite coming from a family of lawyers (dating back to before Italy was even a state), I decided to study molecular biology. Once I completed those studies, I decided to go to law school, an unconventional choice for Italy, which does not have an undergraduate and graduate system. I emigrated twice, first from my hometown to Rome, and later from Rome to Los Angeles, and in the process I became an Italian attorney at law, an Italian patent attorney, a European patent attorney, a US patent attorney and a member of the State Bar of California.

I developed an insane passion for patent law, which has become the nirvana for my love of science and the law. I had and still have the privilege of working with great scientists, lawyers and innovators, and my journey continues. As a patent attorney I face the ongoing challenge of an ever-changing and not always consistent body of case law. As the founding and managing partner of a patent law firm, I face the ongoing challenge that comes from having to manage and steer a very diverse group of people – each with different talents, personalities, expectations and lives – toward a common goal.

I know this is not as sexy as being a trial attorney pacing the courtroom in Hollywood style, but I love every bit of it and would not trade it for any of the other paths that other people had prepared for me and that I did not take. When we talk on the phone, my mother still asks me: “Yes honey, but what is it exactly that you do?” I explain what I do to her, and I believe that she is happy that I have created a place for myself. So I encourage you to always trust who you are, and remember that when you find yourself at a crossroads, if you follow who you are, the others will follow.

Enrica Bruno – Patent Attorney

Enrica Bruno is a patent attorney at [Steinfl & Bruno Intellectual Property Law](#).

Zandra Beauty: Made by a Girl For Girls



Hi Zandra! It's a pleasure to talk to you today! Can you tell us a little bit about Zandra Beauty?

Zandra beauty is an all-natural skin care line that I own. We promote to teen girls, preteen and teenage (girls my age). It's geared towards girl power and inspiration. Last year we launched a re-brand of the line, with quotes on the bottles, new packaging.

Why did you decide to start your own business?

The idea came from dad, I was nine when the creation was born. I was obsessed with lip gloss and balm. I'd ask my dad everyday to buy me new ones because I'd go through them really fast and my dad suggested I make them. I thought it was a joke, but then I thought "How do you make them?" I started researching eventually we ordered the ingredients and tested out ideas. I started selling my products at church and people liked it. When it really took off was when I went to Boston in 2010, before Buffalo had a LUSH store, I saw all the products and I really wanted to do it. I wanted to make more stuff.

What are the biggest rewards and challenges of owning your own business?

I would say the biggest rewards are meeting new people, exciting people, famous people. I get to travel and have opportunities to inspire my generation. It's fun, I get to do my own thing and make a difference. My challenges...I'd say still trying to manage a business and school and then social life and working.

Where did you learn how to make all the amazing beauty products you sell?

Basically, I did a lot of research online and watching YouTube videos on soapmaking, etc. Overtime, as we progressed, we made some mistakes...That's when we got the recipes on point. We went to some soap-making seminars

and things like that, but we had no experience.

I really like the cute and uplifting phrases you put on your bottles! Can you tell me a little bit about your package design?

The re-brand was a partnership, which helped me with the packaging. The quotes came in when I was asking friends. "Why do you buy products, do you keep the packaging?" I keep everything- it's bad, I keep it if it's cute. I wanted to make something you really want, that you like and wanted to keep the packaging. That's where the quotes came in. The words and letters are cool so you want to keep the bottle, but you also feel a positive message when you use it.

Can you tell us about the Junior Women in the Spotlight (WITS) network?

There's another part of the original WITS movement, the founder, Michelle Barron, is my mentor. In 2013, she asked me if I would be an ambassador for the junior WITS program. It's kind of the same thing, all women's group for empowerment and uplifting. You don't have to be an entrepreneur, but you should have the same mindset, you want to make a difference and do something and not fall into average. It's an all women's group that wants to plan and have women's support. So the Junior group is like that, an uplifting group to talk and not be just another girl's group. I don't want it to just be like "stay away from boys," like the other groups I go to say. I want to be empowering.

How do you balance your business, school work and social life?

It's the hardest thing ever, even without the business. It's homework, due dates and tests. When school started, I go with my mom to the studio, we go on Tuesday and Thursday and try to make it home by nine o'clock

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More from Zandra Beauty



Zandra herself!

I do homework and then take breaks to help out. I might just be there doing homework, if I have a lot. Social life, it's kind of the same. I try to hang out with my friends. I may bring them with me to a speaking engagement or to a place where I have to sell, they come and they like it. They're all involved too.

What do you like to do for fun?

I like to hang out with my friends. I'm on my phone like...a lot. I like to listen to music and dance and do gymnastics. It's kind of hard to find a gymnastics school, I might wait to start at a new gymnastics team. I might wait until after spring, or even later. Freshman year, I just want to transition. I just want to focus on business and school.

Thinking about the future, do you think you'll always own your own business?

Yes I do. I think right now I am trying to build it up so I can do it as a side thing and hire people. But yes, I will keep building it so I can have employees to make the products and I can do more inspirational work in the community. That's what it's all about: giving back.

What do you think the world would be like if more girls owned their own businesses?

Oh wow! I think if more girls owned businesses, it'd be a game changer for my generation. Girls would be more educated and access to resources to care for selves and families in long run. It'd be a more productive world and we'd have less problems. Everyone would have the same goal to work towards, it'd be more empowering. More productive but more fun!

Do you have any idea of what's next for you?

I still want to build my empire and I want to travel and go to other countries and do motivational speaking. I want to teach others that you can do anything no matter what age you are. Teach about entrepreneurship, but not push, just let people know it's an option. I think being an entrepreneur is great, but if there's something you love, you should do it.

Zandra makes tons of great, all-natural products for your skin, lips and hair. Her products come in cute, inspirational packages (which you will totally want to keep)!

You can shop her site, [Zandra Beauty](#), like her on [Facebook](#) or start a chat on [Twitter](#). You can even learn how to be a [Zandra Beauty Brand Ambassador](#).

To learn more about the [Junior WITS Program](#), you can check it out [here!](#)



Adrienne Burke
Photo by Sydney Cain

Adrienne Burke & Cassady Fendlay's ChangeComm

Cassady Fendlay: I manage strategic communications for nonprofits and "social enterprises," which means small businesses with a social mission. I help my clients figure out how to share information with their supporters, how to respond to emerging stories and how to craft stories or actions that get media attention. Sometimes I also write the content, but mostly other people write so I can focus on the big picture.

Adrienne Burke: We also focus on organizing strategy and leadership development so that we can help provide better resources for those who want to make a change in the world.

CF: I never thought I'd own my own business. My mother ran a healthy grocery store for 25 years and I saw firsthand how much hard work it is to own a business. A couple years ago I lost my job unexpectedly, and I had to admit to myself I was working in a field where I wasn't very happy. I wasn't sure what I should do and the city I lived in was very expensive so staying there meant I had to find something immediately. In a big leap of faith, my partner and I decided to move out of our apartment, store our all stuff in his parents' basement, and went on a big road trip all across America. We were traveling for over a month. It gave me plenty of time to think deeply about what I really wanted my life to be like, what I was really passionate about, and what my strengths and talents I could contribute to the world. When I got to the end of the journey, I knew I wanted to work for myself.

AB: I worked for nonprofits and did cool projects, but wanted to find a way to sustain the work I was doing. A lot of communication and organization work- due to funding- tend to be very temporary positions. A lot of the projects were related to campaigns and when a campaign is won, it's on to the next step. For me, the business side needed to figure out how to take organizers and communicators and get them resources. I wanted to figure out a better solution so that we could collectively sustain the types of projects- that were important but tended to be short term. It's still developing- we're a new company!

I don't have all the answers yet, but I think this career kind of came to me. I didn't leave college looking to start a business, but I did leave loving communication and the leadership classes I took. It's been good to put those to use and build upon my experiences to create something new. Sometimes entrepreneurship finds you.

CF: I knew Adrienne before we started the business, but not really as a "friend," meaning we hadn't really hung out that much. I got to know Adrienne through a women's professional development group that I co-founded called the Athena Leadership Society. Although I didn't know much about Adrienne's personal life, I knew a lot about her professional life: her strengths, passion and experience but also her challenges and failures—and how she dealt with those. It was the perfect information for selecting a business partner.

We are close friends now, but actually we joke that it's a lot like being married. We have to work closely together, be honest with each other, be comfortable giving and receiving critical feedback, and, most importantly, be accountable to each other. Our lives and our futures are dependent on each other now, and if we have a conflict, we have to figure out how to resolve it. I think picking a business partner is one of the most important decisions you can make, and you should take it as seriously as picking someone to marry. Just because you're great friends doesn't necessarily mean you'll be great business partners.

AB: It's easy for us to balance our friendship because it was largely based on networking and leadership development. I met Cassady through a mutual friend when I was volunteering as a peer mentor with a DC nonprofit. We connected over things we were interested in and after a year, it made the transition pretty easy. We weren't old friends from high school. It was very intentional, to form this partnership.

One piece of advice I'd give people going to business with friends is to be open-minded and honest with your vision and goals. Definitely make sure whoever you go into business with is willing to give the same amount of investment, time, money, sacrifices. Sometimes that's a friend, or someone you meet at a networking event, a co-worker, someone you volunteer with, definitely be open to those possibilities.

AB: I feel like I've been trying to redefine what is a normal, routine day. At the early stages of building a business, there's a lot going on. There's a lot of ways to think about a normal day. Typically I wake up, make breakfast and coffee and look at emails. I've been trying to build my own set of goals for the day- tasks or internal things like learn to manage Quickbooks- that are new to me. Depending on what needs to get done, it depends on what we must do. It's important to have moments to yourself to build routine. In a start up where you have to be ready to jump at any opportunity, it's important to get something stable so if you go off routine at least you have a structure. It's a challenge to create but it is helpful for preventing burnout and increasing productivity. I try to incorporate mid-day yoga if I can. It's important to schedule that kind of stuff just as much as your work stuff. Schedule fun.

CF: I wake up early and the first thing I do is check my emails to make sure there are no crises to manage. Then I meditate and do some yoga. I work from home most days, so after breakfast I get settled at my desk and then it's conference calls, emails, drafting documents, and task managing. I stay productive by taking 10 minute breaks—basically anything to get my body active after sitting for a while. I end my work day usually just before dinner. After dinner I am frequently working on one of my side projects. I never watch any TV and I mostly read stuff that will help me with my business or one of my projects. I put in very long days, but I love everything I'm doing so I'm motivated to keep moving forward! I make sure I have time,

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ChangeComm continued

on the weekends or when I take vacation, to completely unplug from everything so that I don't burn out. I guess I'm kind of an "on or off" person—either I'm working around the clock or I'm completely ignoring my phone and the internet to spend time with my loved ones, be in nature, or something.

CF: The biggest challenge is learning to improve, while also learning completely new skills of building and managing a firm. I'm learning several different things at the same time. To be honest there was a point when I was very overwhelmed, but I realized I was too far invested in it, so I simply had to keep moving forward. I think that's been one of the biggest rewards: I'm forced into a position where I just have to let go of worry and fear and do the best I can today. And that's a really great thing, letting go of worry. We waste entirely too much time on worrying, because we have these ideas about what we want the future to look like and we get really attached to those specific outcomes. This business has taught me to let go of that fear and just be the best I can be today, and that's incredibly freeing.

AB: Challenges are different all the time. The more we grow, the more rewarding and challenging it gets. Some of the biggest challenges for me are trying to remain forward thinking while maintaining control over all of the different tasks, without being overwhelmed. One of the most rewarding things is the network we're becoming a part of. There's so much support from people who are trying to build change-oriented businesses. It's also rewarding to be put in a position of leadership for something we're building from the ground up. We ask "What is ChangeComm in 2025?" Then we're like "Are we thinking far enough ahead?" Just yesterday it feels like it was the 90s and we were watching Clueless, haha. That stuff comes from nowhere! We have to try to remain conscious of our steps to build our vision without being overwhelmed.

CF: I think [entrepreneurs need] persistence or tenacity. You have to be willing to take a big risk and deal with failure along the way. No matter what, you still have to keep moving forward, and that takes a persistence that's kind of like armor. Another essential quality is self-honesty: the ability to see what you're doing wrong without judgment or shame. When you're doing something completely new, you're going to screw things up, you're going to waste time and resources, you're going to upset people. You have to be able to honestly observe your mistake, acknowledge it and learn from it, without beating yourself up about it. I guess that's also where persistence kicks in and you say "I'll do better tomorrow."

AB: There's so many qualities that make a good entrepreneur. It depends on what you're trying to do- you need to make sure your skillset aligns with the problem your business is trying to resolve. It's important to embrace change, to be OK with being flexible when you need to but learning in each part of the process. Having a positive attitude, which sounds cliché but is so important. If you think positively, people will buy into what you're doing, even if deep down they think you're crazy for stepping out of the box like that; they will think it's working. Especially in

the face of adversity, there's always going to be changing opinions and things to overcome. If you're positive you'll get through it. Just being willing to take a risk is important. We all have fear, but putting it aside...I don't know if that's a quality, but it's important to accept that fear is made up and will only hold you back.



Cassidy Fendley

CF: The reality is, right now sexism still exists in the workplace. I don't like to focus too much on it because I don't want us to feel powerless over it, but in many work settings, you're going to have to work harder to get the same recognition, and you're going to have to deal with annoying things like a guy trying to talk over you at a meeting. The only way we're going to change that is if there are more women in executive positions. You can do that by being persistent and working your way up the ladder in an existing organization, and I have several friends who are, or you can start your own and make it a fair workplace from the start. I think we're starting to see that shift, and there are lots of women running start ups today, so I'm optimistic. Girls can change the world!

AB: [If more girls ran their own businesses] the world would just be better, you know? I think we'd have a more broad outlook on everything, especially with relations to business. Little girls would have better role models and see at an early age a lot of possibilities and see that leadership does look like them. Anytime we can instill a better sense of equity in the business world- especially if those business are already doing good- maybe one day we won't need funds and charities to do things that we as people can do. We'd be able to solve our own problems.

CF: I still feel so new to this, even after a year, and I still have so much to learn. There are lots of things that come to mind: don't be afraid to fail, don't give up, learn how to change... But I'm going to go real simple and practical: Learn how to meditate. I don't mean become a Buddhist, but it's really important to learn how to clear your mind and just be. You can do that in lots of ways, too—going for a tough hike, or letting yourself go while your dance, or just sitting comfortable in silence. There's no right or wrong way, but there is so much to overwhelm you, so much to drag you down, and so many things that might feel unnatural at first (like admitting your mistakes, letting go of useless worries). I feel strongly that the best way to get through it all is to regularly get into a space where you let it all dissolve and just let yourself be a living, breathing, miraculous human—and nothing else.

AB: Do your research, use as many free resources as possible. Realize you have a lot of support already and don't be afraid to lean on those people. Just try it. Just do it- if you fail, it'll all be ok. Fail hard, get back up and keep moving.



Essynce Couture: Teen Fashion Designer, Stylist, Author

Essynce Moore



MH: Hi Essynce! We're so excited to talk to you today! Can you tell us a little bit about Essynce Couture?

Essynce Moore: Essynce Couture is my clothing line that my mom and I started when I was 10. Basically its fashions for kids, tweens and teens, age 5-17. It's all kinds of unique stuff you don't see every day. My brain is

outside the box so my clothes are too.

Why did you decide to start your own business?

Not only in the moment, but the words came so quickly when my mom asked. It was like instinct. She said "Essynce you've been designing clothes for a long time, do you want to start a business?" I said yes, yes mommy! I remember that day, after school and my mom just asked and I thought of all my ideas and I knew it was meant to be.

What are the biggest challenges and rewards of owning your own business?

Biggest challenges are that I don't get to do things my friends are doing in school, like try out for basketball or take dance. I have to devote time to design, I devote a lot of time to design. I don't get to hang out that much and have the perfect, clichéd twelve year old life. My biggest reward is the fans- my Essys- I love being able to inspire kids my age. When they ask for my autograph or take a picture with me, it makes me feel like I'm making a difference. It's so cute like at fashion shows.

Can you explain a little bit about Essynce Couture University?

EM: ECU is something we came up with. We teach young boys and girls about education, leadership, entrepreneurship and integrity. We combine social media with that too, because it's so important today. They can send us pictures of their awards and we send them snapbacks, lip gloss, some-

thing to let them know that we're listening and we're proud of them. Sometimes you just need to hear that, you know?

You started to design at just six years old and launched a collection at ten! That is so impressive. How did you get interested in design?

I started when I just started to look at outfits. I love shopping, I love the mall. I love looking at clothes and then I thought "oh this might be better if..." Instead of just thinking about it, I wrote down the ideas and my mom gave me sketch pads. By 7, I wrote "Essynce Couture on the sketch pad. It started when I was young. When something starts when you're young, I get a feel that it's meant for you and this was meant for me.

Between showing at fashion weeks, balancing your styling clients, designing, Essynce Couture University, etc. plus school and normal teenager stuff- how do you balance your schedule?

I kinda cut my life in half. During the weekdays, I have school, that's school life. Sometimes I have to do EC there because people ask about it! I try to divide it up evenly. If it were all combined, I'd be stressed or overwhelmed. That's not good for me, nothing gets done when people are stressed. I have my 12 year old life, I hang out, see my family. I have my school life which is about grades. That's like, obligated to be important. Yeah, I do that. On the weekends, I mainly do Essynce Couture, that's where it takes over- fashion shows, events, it's a blast. It's always fun to do stuff you love.

When you're not working, what do you like to do for fun?

I also want to act so I am probably like writing a script. I also love to swim, I like to be underwater. Those are things I love to do outside of design, its natural 12 year old hobbies. Most of my friends are online a lot. I don't blame them. You can make the cutest outfits online even!

How do you stay inspired to design?

There's been times when I wanted to stop because there were so many things that come with having a business. I always said I'd quit, but then I'll be on my bed, thinking of when I was young, a little six year old with a sketch pad and a pencil and I knew I couldn't give up no matter what. I wanted to say "I'm done with Essynce Couture," but I could never say the words because it has become a part of me.

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More from Essynce Couture

What are your current favorite fashion trends?

I love now, what I'm trying to do is cute and casual. A challenge of mine is to make jeans and t shirt look cute, so I've been looking on Tumblr and Instagram...I look at like, scarves...I've been focusing on accessories to add to my outfits.

What is one thing every girl should own?

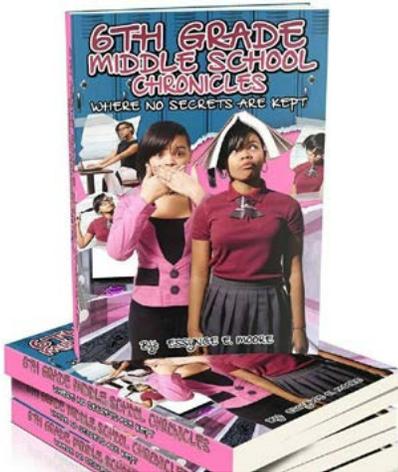
A choker necklace! I own like seven, I'm obsessed and you can wear them with everything. When I first wore them, people asked if I could breathe. My friends were like "Oh that's Essynce, we just expect this from her." But it's like a staple piece, they come in so many different ways that match any personality and outfit.

How do you think the world would be different if more girls ran their own businesses?

I'd think not just girls, but boys too, I think kids would be more mature. It's fun not having responsibility, but you get to grow up a little quicker. It comes with the job. It prepare you for life: bills, economics, that stuff, it prepares you for it, naturally. If more kids had their own businesses, they would understand that stuff better.

What advice would you give to a girl looking to start her own business?

My advice, don't let labels stop you- age, ethnicity, that stuff...it shouldn't hold you back from doing something you love. Age is such a thing people judge off of, I think if we got past that, we'd be surprised at the things kids can do. Kids are so capable of doing things. We hear the question "what do you wanna be when you grow up?" Little do we know that we can start now.



You are such an accomplished young lady already! Do you have any idea of what's next for you and Essynce Couture?

Essynce Couture is bringing some new stuff you wouldn't expect from a twelve year old. Next EC is going to have a book come out. I was in the 6th grade last year and I wrote about it, so I am about to write a book for my sixth grade experience. For all those who are about to be sixth graders, Essynce Couture is about to have a book out for them describing my middle school experience.

Is that positive or negative?

Both! When it comes to kids you don't know what to expect. I think a lot of it will be surprising. You'll see what goes on behind closed doors when your child enters the school building. My experience is so interesting, you learn something new every year, and I was like "Man, I thought fifth grade was hard!" I wish years came with warning labels, like give me a heads up! Lemme know what's going to happen.

Anything else you want readers to know?

I want everyone to know that it's ok to be different. A few months ago I shaved the side of my hair and I got judged. Some people were scared of me and some people were proud. I want people to know that that's a part of growing up; not everyone will like you or what you do, but as long as you love yourself and what you do, that's what matters. Don't let anyone stop you.

You can check out some of Essynce's designs [here](#).

Learn about [Essynce Couture University](#).

[Shop Essynce Couture](#).

Look for her book (pictured above) coming soon!



A Conversation with gabriellejordan

entrepreneur author speaker

Gabrielle Jordan is a fourteen year old powerhouse; she designs her own jewelry line, has penned a book, does motivational speaking, leads a mentoring group and is an active philanthropist. How does she do it all- and stay on top of school work and still have fun?

Entrepreneurship is in Gabrielle's blood. After developing an interest in jewelry and using YouTube and magazines to teach herself how to make pieces, Gabrielle learned that if she started a business, she would be a sixth generation entrepreneur. "I took my pieces to school," said Jordan "and people would buy them off me. Once I learned I'd be a sixth generation entrepreneur I knew I wanted to continue and start a business." Gabrielle's jewelry line, Jewelz of Jordan, is just one facet of the Gabrielle Jordan empire.

Other aspects of Gabrielle's empire include the ExCEL mentoring group and public speaking events. Her ExCEL mentoring group offers weekly motivational, leadership, and business videos as well as networking opportunities for young entrepreneurs. Staying motivated and mentally ready is important to Gabrielle. "Your mind is an important tool," Gabrielle notes. "Your mindset can make or break you. Your mind should be ready for the good and bad. I try to listen to success CDs to put positivity into my brain so I'll stay positive and focused. Put in good things, education and positivity, so you can get good things out."

Gabrielle encourages others, especially girls, to start their own businesses. "If more girls ran their own businesses, we could solve a lot of problems. Think about all the negative things that happen- bullies, naysayers...there'd be a lot less pressure and lot less bullying if people had more courage to take calculated risks and just the want to go out there, it'd be a lot different and peo-



ple would just go out and do things." With all of her accomplishments and successes, Gabrielle serves as an excellent role model and inspiration for potential entrepreneurs.

Although Gabrielle is no stranger to public speaking (hear her [TEDXTalk](#)), she admits she still gets nervous. "If you don't get nervous, something is wrong! I really care about what I talk about, so I get nervous. I try to prepare myself by staying distracted; I doodle or sit quietly." Although Gabrielle claims to be an introvert, she says she's working on it. "I still have shyness inside of me, but it's better. To be myself when I go onstage, I need to embrace myself so I'm not worried that I'll mess up, or know that I can recover if I do mess up. I just need to be myself."

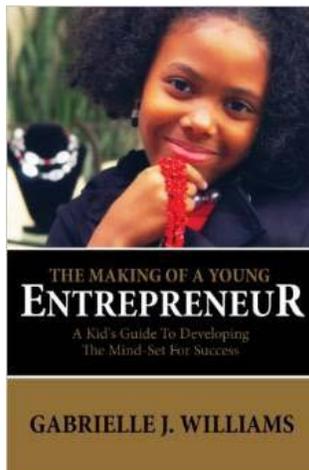
With so many responsibilities, Gabrielle looks to others for inspiration. "Inspiration comes from the people I inspire. When someone tells me I've inspired them to write a book or start a business that keeps me going. Winning the

McDonald's BlackYouth Award was validating, I love seeing that people are accepting and understanding my message. It's inspiring. My message is obviously reaching people, so I can't give up. If I give up, I miss opportunities to inspire others."

Gabrielle doesn't just inspire people through her writing, her talks and her jewelry, she is also an active philanthropist who gives back to Smile Train (an organization that gives surgeries to children with cleft palate), the Red Cross and her local food pantry. She also is a youth ambassador for the Tigerlily Foun-

dation, which empowers, supports, and aids women with breast cancer. "Giving is very important to me," Gabrielle says. "I've been blessed with so much and I lot of people don't have the same opportunities.

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Gabrielle Jordan continued

If I can give a portion of my blessings to others, it can do a lot for those people. I've always wanted to give back and I encourage others to as well because you may not understand how much you've been blessed. When you meet someone who doesn't have as much as you have, you realize how much you do have. It can be so humbling too, a real eye opener."

When she's not juggling her multitude of responsibilities, Gabrielle likes to do "regular kid stuff" like watch TV, cook and sleep. She also likes to "stress box," where she punches the bag for a while. As she looks towards the future, Gabrielle sets her standards high. "I'm coming out with new programs, new things, it's going to be very exciting. I'm going to be working on doing a business Bureau for teens. I want to be a gemologist and study gems and classifies them. I want to do that and there's a school in NY called Gemological Institution that I would like to attend so I can be a certified gemologist."

Gabrielle attributes her successes so far to God, her mother and other family members (whom she calls Team Gabrielle), as well as her mentors, assistant and others who support her on her journey. She demonstrates that someone is never too young to influence others. Gabrielle Jordan's accomplishments and commitment to helping others show that teenage girls can make a mark on the world.

To learn more about Gabrielle Jordan, visit her [website](#). You can also learn more about her [ExCEL program](#), [her book](#), and her [Jewelz of Jordan line](#).



Follow Gabrielle on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) to stay up-to date on her latest endeavors.

Thanks for reading the



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