

Oh, my goodness. Oh my life here we are, 100. One hundred Minty live broadcasts and look who we've got! Alice's here. I've been telling you all week she was coming and here she is. A vision of entrepreneurship just sitting here with me.

Today has absolutely nothing to do with me. It's all about you Alice, I'm afraid. Absolutely. We want to know everything about you, pick your brains. We've only got however long you've got to give us. I can see people joining us. Rebecca, Vicky, Nathalie's already here. Fantastic. Emma, Suzanne, Michelle. Hi everybody. Get your questions. Get your questions ready. So, so I was just saying here in the green room, I saw you speak two or three or four years ago, I forget now. And I was blown away by this fabulously normal Northeast lass, standing there, speaking about this business, that she'd grown into, well, you've got to tell us, so tell us how, why? Why did it start? Why did Pink Boutique come about?

So the funny thing is I've only really recently realised why it came about. So I was teaching in high school and was like a cover teacher. So just like a supply teacher. And we had this like staff training session and they said, where do you want to be in one, three and five years? When I put up five years, own my own business. And I totally forgot about that until recently. I think it was that that made me do it. And I subconsciously must have had that. And I started searching online. Basically. I was completely skint, so I literally could not afford anything.

I moved, my mum encouraged me to buy my first house. And I moved in with my then boyfriend and then we split up and I just really could hardly afford to live. So I was living on like six pence noodles. With inflation I think they've gone up in price, but that was really the only meal I could get, which is not really nutritious. So I literally, I thought, well, if I can sell some stuff on eBay on the side, I can make some money to help me live. So so I started looking around and found a wholesaler online. And I had a few shots at it to be honest and they were from China, which was all really, really small and really poor quality. And then I was like, Oh, that was a bad idea. And then a few months passed and I couldn't shake this idea. I found a UK wholesaler who were mega expensive. That actually closed down now, which is a shame. But I listed the stock on eBay. At the time I used to shop online and like back then, if you imagine, it was 2012 because it was like, there was ASOS, that was pretty much it. Misguided were just starting and there was nothing else really.

And I used to hunt around to try and find glam clothes. So I would like go on American sites. Like e-com was like hardly even established. And so I decided right, well, I don't know why, but I just thought I'll do these clothes. And eBay at the time, everything was like style the mannequins. So I thought if I can make it look really good, right. You scroll down and like, it's quite like, wow, stop and stare. So this was before like, if you go on Ebay now there's loads of Chinese sellers, loads of cheap stuff. That wasn't the case, people just sold stuff that was second hand. So, so yeah, I started listing stuff. I learned everything myself. Like literally, obviously I didn't, I didn't even know where you would go for it.

So I had done a bit of Photoshop at uni, so I designed my email templates. I got a build your own store at the time. It was called an EKM Powershop and, Oh, sorry, the EKM Powershop was later. I just started selling on eBay and literally, I mean, some days I'm going to school and like I would have sold like 10 things before I even got into work and was getting a bit panicky because I had a half hour lunch break. So, and I had to get to the high street near my school, post my parcels with recorded delivery and if there was a queue, it was game over. I started like roping in asking my dad to come and pick up the parcels from the school car park. And also, and then the Post Office hated me. I used to actually do like a route around.

I used to not go to all the same Post Offices all the time, because they hated me so much, they hated doing recorded delivery so I used to get shouted at in the queue and everything. So, so yeah, I was just constantly like rushing around and it got to the point where I think I was doing about 60 orders a day. And I was like sat down at the dinner table with my mum at my mum's house. And we did a bit of a kind

of calculation. Now I was never good on the finance side. And she said, you know, once you sell this amount of dresses, you could leave your job and you're there. So that was like a big thing for me. And you know, I thought I can either go and do my teaching degree, which I was considering, but teaching was changing a lot. It was becoming a lot more intense. My sister had already gone down that route and I could see what it was like for her. And I thought, if I never do this, try this out, I'm never like, at least I can look back and know that I tried it.

So I thought I'm gonna leave my job. So I did. And yeah, I know it's scary at the time. I didn't have many responsibilities. I didn't have kids, you know? So and I had my mortgage, but I kind of knew that if the worst came to the worst, my mum and dad could probably help me out or I could move back in with them or something. So I didn't know much about kind of business administration, you know, all of that set of like, I had no clue about business or what to do or about finance.

So my mum said, cause she previously had her own, you know, just very small business, cause she used to be a script writer, she used to wait for Hollyoaks and she was kind of self-employed and then she had like a little film business, but it was just like two people. So she knew that stuff and she knew finance. She was better at finance than me. So she said, why don't we set up kind of one share each and set this up as a business cause it's flying. So we set up omne share each and I was doing the creative and the marketing, the sales and the buying and anything that the customer really saw. And she was doing more of the backend and the financial side of things, the bank stuff, all that stuff.

So I was really, really lucky to have her support because I still say that that's not my skillset. And I like to surround myself with people who are good at those things. I don't personally find finance very interesting, but I love marketing. So, so yeah. And then it went from there, so it was like the kitchen table to the loft room. Then we converted my mum's garage. My husband actually built a photography thing, so he made like a thing to take pictures on, which is like white and he built it and that's how we met. And so yeah, about six months after that we moved into a warehouse and my husband actually ended up joining the business because he was just working in it all the time. Weekends we'd go and drive to suppliers, get all the stock in black bags in the back of the van and drive back.

And he was literally like just part of the team already. So yeah, we then we had a warehouse unit and offices and then we just kept on scaling up and then we, so say, last year we were doing 25 million in sales a year and that's shipping out, you know, between one half thousand and 2000 items a day. And we sometimes had more and we had 60,000 square foot in warehousing and offices and so it was absolutely crazy growth, no way I ever imagined ever, ever, ever that that would happen.

But is that what you set out to have or do you think, you know, because we talk about growth in Mint a lot under our own terms, you know. It's frightening to take on stuff, it's frightening to, you know, give up a job. So what we always talk about growth on our own terms and that everything we do is valuable, whether you want to grow by, I dunno, a hundred quid a month or get to the kind of point like you are. But I mean, in what was it? Sort of eight years wasn't it? But I mean to go from what you were doing, chasing about post offices, you know, roping your dad in, to six, seven, eight years later having a multi, multimillion pound turnover business. I mean, how did you cope Alice? That's, that's not insignificant. You know what I mean? Your life must have been frantic like!

My whole life was, my whole life was business and a lot of my life is now. And I don't think it really works if you don't enjoy what you do. And if you're not obsessed with it. I feel like when people who have had really high growth businesses, have got to be obsessed because no rational person would put themselves through all of that because there are ups and downs.

But I think the first time that you do it, you haven't got a clue what's coming. Like if someone sat me down and said, you know, you'll be dealing with this, that and the other. Like all the stuff I've been through, you know, I've had copyright letters Chanel. Like we didn't use their logo, but we bought back

from a wholesaler that looked similar, designer inspired, you know. I've had, you know, like all sorts, every staff issue you can imagine. The majority of them are amazing, but inevitably you do get these things. I've had the website completely down on black Friday for hours at our busiest time. People keep saying that I should slow down, but if you sat me down at the start and said, Oh, do you want all of this? Do you want to deal with all of this?

I would be like, no way! But you just literally press ahead with it. And I think this is maybe one of the issues with trying to preempt. I don't really think so much about the risks. I'm very much, I think about the opportunities. And I think maybe that's the difference between maybe entrepreneurs have some crazy screw loose where they forget about the risk. And make minimal investment. So that no risk is possible. But at the same time, if you just think about what might happen that's bad, it might never ever happen. Do you know what I mean? A lot of people think, well, hold on, I need all of that documentation in place. I need a full business plan. For three years, we never had a business plan. Literally we never did because every time we wrote one it changed.

So, cause I hear you. You just kind of, you just went all in. You just were like, I'm going to have a go, right? And that's what I love about your story is I'm just going to have a go because, and if you have, it's like the kids in the classroom, right, is that, you know, if they're having a go, you can just, as long as they'll have a go, you can help them be whoever they want to be. Do you think though, as you grew, you needed a bit more of that structure, like the business plan, did it help with the growth? Because I'm going to imagine that you, at some point with all that turn over and that change, that had to be a little bit more structured than maybe what you started with.

Yeah. Well processes and, you know, bringing in an HR manager who figured out all of the structure, the pay banding, all the roles and responsibilities, but it doesn't have to be perfect first time.

So your things can evolve. You know, at the very start we had warehouse with Ikea shelving, the little room divider shelves with all the boxes and that was brilliant. And then we'll look back and think, eeh, do you remember when we had a warehouse full of Ikea. It was spot on, you know. People had a one page job description. We didn't have a handbook. And then we my husband's brother worked for the Co-op and he had his employee handbook. So we kind of looked at the employee handbook of the Co-op and used that as a bit of a framework, but, and then obviously when we got like an HR consultant, like a legal side of things, they did the full thing. I just don't think everything needs to be the finished article. And that's one of the messages that would like to maybe send out where people are like, I can't do that because I haven't got this.

I remember thinking, we were in the garage and my mum had goats and she, it was a lifelong thing. She loved goats and she'd always wanted goats. So she moved like semi rural and she was like, I want goats and then we moved the business into the garage. But there was a goat pen in the way. And I remember saying, I can't take on staff. I can't employ people to work, like walk past the goat pen in the morning. And now I look back and think what a quirky little thing. You could have put it literally on the job, on the job advert, because it's like, but you think at the time, like I'm not professional enough for that. You know, how can I take stuff on? I didn't have a clue. But I just did it.

And I think like you said, yes have a go, but put everything, put all of your effort in. Like I had it described once that whatever you're doing, do it as well as you can, even if you're working behind a bar or whatever and opportunities just come from that. So yes, I'm very much like an all in person and like very, like very much have a go.

Have you ever then suffered from a lack of confidence? Or, you know, I I'm assuming you must do because we all do, but you come across as so confident, you know what you are, where you're going. But of course we all have those moments where we just lack, and it might be two minutes, it might go

on for weeks that self-belief. How did you overcome that then? Because for us, it's so critical that you believe that you can do this.

Like that's our Mint Mindset, if you like. We have to believe in ourselves. We have to know our customers want our stuff, but if we don't believe in ourselves, what do we have, do you know what I mean? So how did you overcome those moments where you were just like, Oh, what is going on?

Well, I kind of, in a way, I want to be that person who says, Oh yeah, you can become this really confident person. But the reality is every single day I get it. So I mainly get it when I come home from work. So when I'm at work, nobody would ever know. I'm just very much, you know, so confident, a million miles per hour. And then when I get home, I sit and think, and I overanalyse, and I don't know if this is something, especially as women that analyse what we've said, or did I do that right?

Or what did I look like? I'm literally, every time I've put up a video, I sit and overanalyse it and then I have to just be like, just switch it off, just move away and leave it. Because once the comments come in and support you go, Oh, it was all right, but you kind of need a little bit of validation. And that's what I think is great about groups like yours, where you can put the feelings out and people go, yes, it's a great idea. Just go for it. What's the worst that could happen?

And so I literally it's all the time and I think it's totally natural and totally normal, but I think I just get up the next day and just crack on with it. Cause I get so excited and think about if, if it's making you feel and you're really just not enjoying it, it's not right for you, but you know, lean into what you really love.

I've had to be very intuitive over the past couple of years, where I've tried to move out of what I don't like doing and into what I do like doing because as a business owner, I'm sure a lot of people on here will, will feel this as well. And I do too. You often end up in a role that actually think this isn't what I like to be doing. And for me that was the MD role. So you know, I love business, but sitting in meetings all day, just literally looking at spreadsheets and that side of things, high, high level stuff. I can do it. I can do it pretty competently. And even if I do overanalyse every time when I've done but I don't really enjoy it. I'm naturally more of a creative person. So that's why when we set up these three businesses, Andrew, my husband is very operational.

He loves the MD thing. He loves being in meetings. And I just said, you know what? I'm going to be on the creative side. And sometimes the way that I deal with that to get into the right head space is I flit about a little bit. Sometimes I don't come in for half a day. I might, I might work from home. I can do things like you know, I'll go to TK Maxx and have a look around at home stuff. I might post on the Instagram, but I have to keep my brain going. Because what I realised is when I'm doing that stuff that I don't enjoy doing, my creativity just disappears. I have to train myself back into it. My biggest role within this business is to keep the innovation, new ideas coming and keep rolling stuff out. And if I just end up like that, no one's doing that.

And it's not easy. So I suppose what I'm saying is, and this is for everybody in the business as well. So understanding what your absolute best thing to do is if you can delegating the other stuff, and I know a lot of people say to me, I couldn't possibly afford a cleaner for the house, but if it's taking up your time and you can figure out what you would be generating in revenue, that's how I think about it, now. I honestly think, I mean, sometimes I do like doing the cleaning. It's a bit therapeutic, but I think right, how many, how many sales could I be driving in this time if I was on my a game and I can delegate in my life? And sometimes that might feel like a big investment at the start. Like, Oh God, that's going to be 200 quid a month or whatever for me to hire that or outsource that. But if I can drive two hundred quid of profit, it's worth it.

It is worth it, not to have to clean your house. Because I mean, we had one of our members, I swear. She said, when I get to this level, I'm getting a cleaner, that's the only thing. She's an artist, Joanne if you're

listening. And I remember the conversation so clearly, because we went through with the money she was bringing in and she'd hit the figure that she needed to get cleaner. And hadn't even really quite realised. And then the next thing I know, she's like, Oh my God, I've got this cleaner. I can, I can draw more. I can be more creative. And that comes up over and over again, we can't afford to do this because we don't have the cash. And the argument is always, but you can bring more cash in. You can do more of what you're good at if you, if you delegate out the stuff that you know, you're not inspired by, or that you don't like doing, I mean, let's face it. There are loads of things in our businesses that we don't like doing. But I think we feel a pressure because it's ours that we should like every bit of the business. Why, why should we? I'm not an accountant. I'm not, you know, so it's this, and it's so refreshing.

I can't tell you how many people have just gone, great advice. Thanks for your frankness. Thanks for what you're saying. We've got at least 10 people who said, I really needed to hear this today. Alice, this is, you know, we need to hear people like you who are like us saying it how it is, because it's hard work. Like isn't it? It's hard work to run a business and you're right. We need to be obsessed a little bit with it. If we want it to be what we want it to be, you've got to talk yourself into it. And thankfully, you know, our members are all like that.

So, but in October, okay, you start three businesses. And someone's just asked I think, who was it? Nathalie's asked, what keeps you going? But there you are. We get locked down. It's been horrendous for everybody. We all know that, but you decide to start three businesses, not just one, you know what on earth drove you to do that in this time? You know, cause a lot of us have taken an awful lot of time to sit back and reflect and go, Oh, what's happening? Like, but your energy and your passion for it as pushed you completely the other way.

I know I was saying to you before, I feel like being locked in, made me want to break out. I don't actually feel like I've ever been told what to do in a long time, which I think is an entrepreneur thing as well. Like sometimes you just, you kind of do what you want. I mean, growing the business and stuff and like, right, I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that. But when somebody, like when the government said, you just can't go out, I couldn't even take my little girl to the park. And really, I know you said that you struggled. I know a lot of people on here have had loads of issues. And I cannot imagine what it's been like to have a business or something that had to stop and have to pay your bills and all that. So it must have been horrific.

What I found very hard and this seems very, I know this seems very simplistic compared to all of your worries over this time, but is I have a three year old and I couldn't take her out of the house. And I learned when I became a parent that I feel like the objective is to get up and out on any one day and stay out for as long as possible and tire them out. And all of a sudden we couldn't even go to the park. I could walk around the block. That was pretty much it. And I found that really hard, to be honest, I have really, really struggled. And I thought, how long is, how long is this going to go on for? And I just, I went too crazy. And I think that just made us just want to go, like, let's get an office mainly to get out of the house, but let's do these things.

We'd been sitting on three business ideas. But about a year and a half, two years ago, we used to come up with stuff, and we do all the time, we're like, Oh, this is so annoying. Wouldn't it be good if? So it's a niche, it's a pain point. And then, so we started talking about setting up, I had studied just an online diploma in interior design. We started talking about, well just me doing some freelance work. But when I started putting out that, cause I'm very social media focused and very try and get high growth on social. It got such a big response on social. And I was like, I can't do all of that. And I don't want to turn it away. Like my worst nightmare in the world is turning sales away. I just, I hate turning business away.

So we're like, right. Let's hire an interior designer, bearing in mind I've never worked in an interior design agency, came up with this formula of how to do it. So we do like mood boards, floor plans, 3d

designs and a full shopping list, all virtually. And yeah, so we took on an interior designer. I didn't really know what to do with managing them, they're more qualified than me. They've got a degree. And yeah, so we took on a designer and her time, just completely filled up and within a week of her starting we took on another designer. So, I'm not pushing it at the minute, the designing side of things for sale because I couldn't cope with the demand, but I'm now at the point where I'm bringing in a really senior person, a head of design, he was with big, big, design companies over in Dubai, doing hotel projects. So it's like, you know that really hard point where you're really trying to get together the sales and the momentum and to justify bringing that senior person in. Now I'm bringing them in.

So that's like a relief because then I can just let them organise, push and then I can start to kind of see her and say, I want to do this, what do you think? And they can build out this team. So I think I'm really going to go for it on that side. Then the two ideas were food businesses. So we just thought, yeah, let's go for it. They were inspired by kind of me, so I'm always on a diet and I find that really hard to get sorted for the diet. So you go to the supermarket, you don't know what you're getting. And it's such a big undertaking. So I thought, what about a site that just has stuff that you can have? So on Slimming World, that has a section. So you've got the syns on there and Weight Watchers, it's got the points or if you do a low calorie or Keto, so we set that up and I'm winging it, have no experience in the food industry. Nothing.

I used to clear dirty dishes as my first job at St. James' Football Club. That's all I have literally in food or hospitality, but we found out that you can just, there's distributors, so you know, corner shops and stuff, they get all their stocks through distributors, wholesalers, like Booker's, but there's other ones as well. So we bought all the stock in through there to get set up and now we're going direct to brands, but I just honestly turn up, ask people, I've had reps here, fabric reps and they'll go, Oh yeah. And they'll say some technical thing. And I just say, what does that mean? Sorry, I'm just winging it. I've just set this up. So you tell me what that means. And I do that a lot and ask people questions just to try and learn.

I think doing it is the best way to learn. You can study, but there's no better degree than you're setting up a business in that industry. So the way that we set up is actually a combination of, I didn't think of it before, to be honest, that we have like an engine room up at the top. So our businesses is Rowan Group. So we have all of our marketing, operations, everyone's employed under Rowan Group and we'll have these offshoots. So we have three businesses and we divide the costs. So there's no way if I launched like just one food business, I'll be able to afford a head of digital. Who does all the inputting? But because I've set up the group I can, because they build across the three businesses. So it's kind of like having agency, but for your own businesses. So yeah, I think we were just like, let's just go all in here.

And the good thing with that is if something fails, or if something flies it's fine and everyone in here is open to the idea that one business might not take off. But we're going to keep on setting up brands or maybe acquiring brands and putting our sprinkle of social media fairy dust on them.

So like staggering, because it seems to me that you, you have these ideas. And again, you're just willing to look at it. You're not embarrassed to ask questions. How many people will sit there and won't ask people stuff because they don't want to seem a bit daft, you know, you've got to learn. You know? So, but for me, it seems like you have this choice. Now, a lot of our members and there are so many of them listening right now who are just loving by the way, loving everything you're saying, absolutely terrified of money. Alice they're scared of charging their worth. And there's a few who are listening right now. I'm looking right at your names. I'm not going to embarrass you, but we're scared of charging our worth. We don't know how to price our stuff. And it all does, especially in the service industry, maybe not so much with the products, but in the service industry, because it's in, it's in our heads. You know, and yet for me, this, this idea that when we make money, you have a choice. You have a choice now in your life, you know. You've built your business, you know, you've, you've got a little bit of revenue to put behind you.

You've got choices, different choices. So what would you say to them all who are just not quite there with understanding their own worth and the money side and money? It's not a bad thing, is it? It's not a bad thing?

No, no, no. Not at all. Cash is king in a business. You know, you have to be generating profit in order to grow. So in our previous business, we put a lot of reinvestment in. So naturally when you're not from a business background, you see money as quite like a dirty thing. And I think it's reframing that because you think that people will think you'll just taken all that money and spend it all on yourself. And you know, when you say top line sales and people think that that's your profit, 25 million pounds in my pocket? No, it isn't.

However, we would have been following you around pulling some out? No, you didn't.

Well, you know, the reality is like that's top line sales figures. So that sounds fantastic. But you know, you've got 40% returns to take off that. So 40% of everything that you send out comes back. So it's a colossal amount. You're kind of halving that revenue there. You've then got all your overheads from a huge warehouse and everything. But I genuinely think if you're scared of money, pay somebody to do it for you. If you can, you know. Even if that's taking out a bit of a loan to have that resource, or you cut down on a luxury or something, just get someone who loves dealing with finances to do that and help you out. Because I do think that you can put yourself outside of your comfort zone and learn it. But if you hate it and you're terrified of it, I don't think you're ever going to love it.

So what value are you going to add? How are you going to grow? And if it's not, it's not your thing don't push yourself into a different role. In terms of competence, I just think I really just live by that kind of mantra. Like what are the ways that can happen? And if you think of it that way, you know, if it's a massive investment or you're taking out a huge amount of finance or something, well, yes that could end badly, but also if you set up as a limited company, you know, you can kind of shut down. I know for saving face it's not the greatest thing. But what's the worst that can happen if you truly jump into what we would love to do. So that's kind of what I want to say. I always say to people I'm not overly qualified.

I was a teaching assistant selling on eBay. I completely learned everything as I went along and I'm still winging it every day. Although I do have a lot of experience in my head now, I do stuff that fails all the time, but I have a test and repeat model. And that's what I absolutely live by is small test. If it works, repeat it back. If it keeps working, keep repeating. So that's with stock, buy a small amount. Does it work? Repeat, repeat but add budget with ads. But even with ads test out a few different ads, which one works, right? Switch the other ones off, put more budget on that one. Is it still worth it? With absolutely everything, you know, with employing more people in the business. You know, if we scaled that one, is it working? Has it reached it's peak? So I just think if you start with a really small test, the worst that can happen is it's not going to be huge.

So I massively just encourage anybody who's watching this, go for it, right? Do this small little test. And also, I don't know how many people are in what industries, but we are coming up to peak and right now is our time to get sorted for peak, it's very much what I've got my head down, sorting Christmas products and stuff. This is a great opportunity as well, if you're thinking about doing something a little bit different in this season to try it.

We're completely over time, I knew we would be, but you're so generous with your time. This idea of test and repeat, which is awesome. And I think some of us do this, but not enough. How much time did you spend analysing the results? Because you test something, you must take a look at what it's telling you. We have, we have a constant, I bang on constantly about looking at your analytics, look at your results. What is it telling you? Do you know the data, right? And it's not a sexy job, right? And most people kind of go, yeah, Nic you've said it again, and then don't do it. But what you're telling us is that you do something little, you test that, you'll look at what you get. If it works, you do some more. And if it

doesn't work, you don't. So what that analysis fits, that piece in the middle, where you actually take the time to go did that work? It's got to be kind of key.

I should do more of looking at data. I'm not a data person. Actually I heard that should is not a good word because we don't actually want to do it. So anyway, I've got someone coming in, who's going to do more of that. I like a one pager. So if people can present that to me in one page, it needs to be broken down quite nicely. Maybe the icons of the platforms next to it, or the pictures of the products. Don't just give me a spreadsheet because I just can't, it takes too long to get into it. But for me personally, just it's a feeling. So it's like if I see things flying off the shelves, I have like the Shopify apps on my phone so I can see the orders and I can just see quickly the best sellers when I go on it on the dashboard.

I just know it's just kind of finger in air, you know, that chocolate bar is mad for us or, you know, see the designs come in through when I can figure out what people are wanting. Right. Can we speed up that process? Because a lot of people want that same thing or should we offer this new product? But I think it's more of an intuitive thing.

I think if you think I need to sit and look at that data, you'll probably never do it. And then, you know, and it's actually sometimes information overload. I sometimes think, you know, in your, in your self, what does well in your business. You know, like for instance, if you're doing beauty, I'm saying this because you mentioned you had people with businesses in the group you might know God, you know what gel nails fly or like no one can get an appointment for lashes, right? I'm just going to expand that side of things. I'm going to, you just know, nevermind sitting down and really in depth looking at it. I do believe in data. I think it's insane. It's amazing. But I think make it relatable to you if you hate it. Just really lean into what works in your business and do more of it basically.

So now, like 60 people have stayed on this call for nearly 40 minutes and they'll be like, Alice said Nicola!

What I would love our members to know is that, you know, they, they need to trust themselves to know what works for their businesses. That's what you're saying. You don't need data to tell you if you've sold 10 of them and only two of those, but the thing that sold 10 is a better seller, but you've got to push yourself and use that initiative. And that intuition that you've just said, we, we run our own businesses, they're ours. We set them up for us and to do what we want to do with them. So we have to believe in ourselves.

You come across and seem to have that in such abundance that everybody listening, all sixty of you, you know, we need, this is why Alice, I knew you were going to inspire us this morning because we need to just know that we're good enough to do this stuff and trust yourself, trust yourself. Don't give yourself time to think about it. Just crack on.

Because if I'll have a think about what I should do, cause I'll just think, no, this could go wrong. That could go wrong, blah, blah, blah. It'll affect my work life balance and that. So yeah, I just crack on like I'm busy all the time. And the funny thing is people say, I had someone say to me the other day, she was like fascinated. And she said, do you like ever watch TV?

Not really, to be honest because I've done a lot of stuff over the last two years, like I said about understanding what I'm good at and what I like doing and what builds me up and makes me beam and drives the business forward. And what I like to do, 'me time' and this, some people just think this is crazy, is sitting at the computer on my own with no disruptions and actually doing a piece of work, you know, when you actually achieve something, because quite often I'm in the office all day. And like, you're just directing. So you don't actually sit and do something, so I just like to do that. My husband goes and watches Netflix? That's what he likes. A lot of people have like different things. I think a lot of people like the escapism of reading or Netflix. It puts you into someone else's world.

So you can escape yours a bit to get a bit of headspace. I like to crack on and just have a bit of time on my own at the computer. So yeah, I just think I'm busy all the time, so I just don't give myself the time. And the time, the worst time for imposter syndrome creeping in is literally when you're lying there. You can't sleep, well, this is for me. I can't sleep. I'm driving home. Like if I give myself time, I'll talk myself out of stuff. So I just think, just don't. Just crack on Alice. Like, don't give yourself the opportunity for it to creep in.

Me personally. Nevermind all 60 people watching. I love you all. You know, I do. Like that is the best bit of advice I think I've ever had for me personally. I mean the amount of times I'm told to slow down and stop, switch off. I can't Alice, but what you're saying is that's all right. Just keep cracking on. And so, okay. So I've kept you for twice as long as we said

I'm fine. Honestly.

If you're fine, if anybody, if you've got any questions for us, please put them in. Now I'm loving the fact that our members and everybody watching you are saying, you're hitting such a nerve. And obviously this will stay on the Facebook page Alice, if you ever wanted to look at any of the comments, but you've got a couple of minutes, right? Get some questions coming through now, please. Just because whilst we've got you, if there's anything else you guys need to know, want to know. I mean, for me, the fact that you just do it is, is absolutely my top moment of this last 40 minutes. You just crack on and you've said it over and over again, crack on and have a goal, you know, trust yourself. All of that is what we talk about in this club all the time. And here you are living and breathing that.

You know what, Nicola, you said in the group before people surrounding them cannot believe in the things sometimes. And I think you have to be really careful of that because I've had that loads. Some people aren't entrepreneurs and they just think about the risk basically, and that's a good way to live. And you know, actually I'm quite fascinated by kind of why we're wired and in caveman times, the reason that you thought of the negative, you thought a lion might come and eat me is because it's actually self preservation. But we've got those, this might happen, this bad thing might happen now inbuilt, but there's no lion. So we really need to push through that and other people starting to, to give you that feedback and their feelings like that can be quite damaging. So I've really kind of look, you know, really don't cut people off or anything. It's really important you have those relationships, you have your family and your friends, but try and protect yourself a little bit. If you have this yearning to do something, you owe it to yourself to give it a chance, but you sometimes need a bit and you sometimes need to switch off from people like giving you that feedback. If you've asked for the feedback, great. But feedback you haven't asked for, I just think, you know, you need to think, well, look, you're not, you're not going to be the person doing it and you don't want that for your life, but I want to give it a chance, you know, I'm going to give it a go. So I think it's important to just, just choose which feedback you take on board.

I love this because you know, when people are giving you feedback that you didn't ask, is that about them? Or is it actually about you that's coming through? So our Teresa from Accelerator Coaching, she says how important do you feel self awareness is when you run a business?

Massively. So I talked about this kind of lean in to what I'm good at. So yes, I used to literally tear myself apart saying, why can't you sit down and look at a balance sheet and enjoy it? You know, why don't you enjoy being in meetings and think that I was bad because of it. Now, the process that I've been on and over the last two years has been actually for the first time saying to myself, you're actually good at some things like, just being honest about what you're not good at. So that has been transformational because I'm actually kinder to myself. And it was taking a lot of strain. It took a massive toll on me, always thinking in my head.

And it's why can't you be consistent and have all your emails answered in time and stuff? And then suddenly I'm, well, hang on. I am like this person who comes up with stuff all the time, because one side of the brain works more than the other. You can't be everything. And you, you talked before about wanting to be good at everything. And I think as well, I do feel like that's a woman thing, you know, you know, needing to clean your house. I mean people in history had maids and home help and they all went out and then all of a sudden we started all working full time. But none of that home help came back in.

I've been like, something's been missed here. We're, we're expected to do the childcare, be the best mam in the world, have a sparkling house. According to Instagram expectations have a social life because that's what work life balance is all about. Isn't it? You should be going on date nights and be bossing it at work. And all of these other things. Have this many holidays a year. And it's all a lot of jobs in the back of your head to do this. And so, yeah, I think leaning into yourself, like if the people watching could do one thing today, it would maybe be, have a think, and I hope this would help you, about what you're really good at and what you're not good at. Everyone's not good at something actually just say, you know what? I'm no good at that. So I'm actually going to get some help on that. If it's being consistent with your emails and stuff, that virtual assistant, who you just pay by the hour, relatively cheap it frees you up, you haven't got that nagging to do list. Oh, I've got to go and do my emails. So that for me, that's what self awareness has been. It's what makes me tick and how, even after the things that I'm not very good at, someone could do a better job of that and actually, they make me less creative.

Thank you so much for that. Love all of it. Our Danielle, she runs a stationary business. Under the Rowan Trees. She is like when you first started and it was like in her garage, she's now got a hut in her garden. So she's like, you she's gone from that place to that place. At which point did you actually know that you needed a warehouse? When you first started it? Was it when it was bursting out the seams or which part in that process, did you get your warehouse?

Yeah, bursting at the seams. Like we always get to bursting at the seams. We always get to like the point where you just go, this can't go on. And then we put something in. And I think that's a good approach, you know, it's quite stressy, but it's part of growing a business. So yeah, we we over-invested a bit because we knew that we were gonna, so maybe filled half the warehouse, but we knew we were growing at such a rate, like 500% year on year. We were like, right, in six months time, we're going to fill that space. So we did have a bit of a look ahead and go with the current room rate where are we going to be? And that's the kind of thing that a finance person can help you with. Even if you just say to them, like, can you just forecast if I continue at this rate, put a bit of seasonality in it, if I continue at this rate where are we gonna be? And then you can get a bit of an idea, but I don't know if you've thought about it, but outsourcing fulfilment is actually a really good option if you're not, not keen on sorting out all those kind of things.

I often think that business owners are like quite creative and the person behind the brand. And what you end up doing is sometimes letting the marketing and the brand slip a little bit because you're so busy packing parcels. And I would definitely recommend, rather than maybe taking on a lease, just have a look for comparison, at somebody else fulfilling your goods. Especially if they're quite straightforward goods like stationary. I don't know if it is, but dresses were really hard to fulfil because of the amount of returns, the sizing, and then all the fault checks. But if you've got quite regular products that you sell, then it can be really, really good. And you can also do fulfill by Amazon. So even if you don't have your products listed on Amazon, you can still send them into Amazon and have them as part of their operation.

So I definitely recommend taking a look at that. Lean in and say, do I really want to get into the operational side of fulfilment and grow it? And if it's a no, if you like taking pretty pictures, coming up

with new products, the trade shows, you know, posts on social media, then just have a look because it might take the strain off that side of things.

Awesome. Thank you. Now, this is a good one from our Tina. How do you deal with copycats Alice? People who, and you talking, you mentioned before you've had the letters about people accusing you, perhaps not true, but how do you emotionally as well, how do you cope? If someone is clearly ripping off your brand, what would you do about that?

So right, I started taking this so personally at the start, putting water marks all over our images and it just ruined the images. And then I realised it's the real measure of how, you know, you're winning because people only want to copy you when you're winning. So once you understand that, I heard this quote recently that said, when you want to worry, is when people stop copying you.

Wow. Yeah.

Actually I know people say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but in the moment, you're fuming. How dare they? I've put all that money into taking nice photos and people are just listing their stuff using my images. How dare they? But you were the original., You have the flair and your business, maybe it's your photos or whatever are probably going to evolve over time. I would say is, if you think about how many, how much time, how much energy that's going to stop thinking about it. Whereas if you just focused on what you're doing and grow in that and pivot in that and move along then, okay.

And your energy, and I guarantee you, probably 95% of the time, those people do not grow because they don't have the original plan to do what's next. And they're always on the back foot, if they're just copying you. So please like, don't let it drain your energy. I know it can be really hard. Try and park it, forget about it in a way, if you can feel a bit of sympathy for them. Cause they don't, that thing they're desperately trying to find something. If you can have that little bit of sympathy for them, it helps you deal. But if you think of them as the enemy and you, you're going to expend your energy, expend your energy on that, when it could be taken, growing your business, you've got to preserve yourself.

Yeah, absolutely love it because obviously someone's copying you. It's not their idea. So how can they have the passion for it? They can't. And what is clear is your passion, but everything you do in this idea that you just crack on, copycats don't have that in the first place. It wasn't there. So it's got to fizzle out.

I just want to just tell you what Pauline said before I give you another question. I've had so many light bulb moments listening to Alice. I'm sitting here dazzled. How nice is that? Cause you're absolutely spot on. So this an interesting one from Teresa again. How will you know when everything is, as you want it to be? Does that moment ever come?

Nothing is ever as you want it to be because you're continually going after the next thing in business. And I think that's how, you know, you're a true entrepreneur. We spoke briefly before the call about people wanting to set up in business because they want flexibility. They want to be their own boss. They want to spend more time with that family. If I'm being completely honest I don't think they're the reasons that I think you should be setting up. I think you should be setting up because you love the business. Cause if you're always taking that thing, to be honest, growing a business is really hard work and you're not going to get there more family time by leaving a job and setting another thing up and I don't think people realise that and they go, Oh, I'll just set up on my own. And then I'll have all this time. I'll be dead rich and I'll have that 25 million in my pocket.

They're not the right motivators. You know it's great to have material motivators like a nice car, financial freedom, all that kind of thing is great to put on an inspiration board. But if you don't love what you're doing, I don't think that you'll get to that point. They're all to me, they're all added benefits of what you're doing. But I do what I do because I love it. And I'm totally addicted and I love launching new stuff. If you don't love it, you're not going to be obsessed enough to get to the point where you have all of

that. So that's, that's probably a bit of a controversial thing to put out. Cause I know a lot of people leave their jobs because they want that.

But it's true Alice. What happens is people leave because they want more freedom and this, that and the other. Because none of us realise what it's like to run a business, you just think that, well people make it look easy, people make it look dead easy. And if you follow this on Instagram and you go here and I can tell you how to increase your whatevers in two minutes, if you do what I've done in 30 days, you're gonna have 30,000 followers instead of three.

Total rubbish, and it drives me bonkers because you can't leave a job and come and start your own business and think you're going to work less. It's just never, ever going to happen. If you think that's gonna happen, then we need to wake up from that. And if that's why you've done it, you're not, you're not going to achieve what you want to achieve because running your own stuff is harder than doing a job for somebody else.

Yeah. I think if you've got an exit plan and it works, but that's years of solid graft to get to the point where you can sell your business. And I got to a point where I was able to appoint senior directors and step out to have my daughter. But, if I'm being completely honest, I took, you know, I took about a year out because I was quite ill in pregnancy. I didn't actually take a year. What I mean, as I was in one day a week and I was working from like, I was looking at it from home, but things slipped actually, you know, you can bring people in and you can say, could you do that? Could you do that? Could you do that? But relying on them to spot the opportunities or evolve it, or you know, that little bit of magic that you bring to your business because you love it. You lose that a little bit. So I don't think when you do that, you necessarily will get that continual growth that you've already fueled. So I think an exit plan is probably the best way to achieve that. It can be achieved, but what you're looking at is getting very, very high growth in a condensed amount of time and then knowing your buyer as well and what your value might be and driving towards that.

But yeah, there's amazing things about running your own business. You know, I wouldn't have it any other way. I don't think anyone would even have me because I'm such a strange personality now. And literally I just think you've got to do it cause you love it. And if you were in a business right now where you think, and I'm not, I don't love it then maybe you should lean in because you're already in business, so there's definitely a driver there. Maybe should lean into what you actually love. What are your hobbies? And making something out of that and applying your business drive to that. It's not that you can't be in business. It's just, maybe you should be doing something that you really love.

Yeah. I just love this honesty. I want to ask you a question I've got to ask you Rita's because Rita wants to know, have you ever had a mentor or is there another skill you think you need to learn now? And then bearing in mind the time I'll have a look and see what anybody else has asked. But my question is once you've started that business, once you've put all the life and soul into it, how difficult was it for you to leave Pink Boutique and then move away from the thing that, you know, I know you were working from early in the morning until midnight for years to build it and you've, and you've left. So my question is that, but coming back to what Rita wanted, you know, who were your mentors? Did you pay for them when you started? There wasn't a club like we've got with people who are willing to listen and share, you just taught yourself everything, which of course we have to do. So this idea of mentorship has that been important to you? And yeah. And, and how do you leave the business you'd started?

So mentoring, I didn't, there was a scheme called growth accelerator which was really good and the government funded coaches and I think it's such a shame that it stopped because actually a lot of people just, haven't got a clue where to go, you know to get that support. So we had a guy, he basically helped us on the finance side of things in terms of planning ahead, a bit planning our kind of next three years with something called an orbit plan. I don't know if you guys have looked at them before, but it's really

good. It's circles and you plot out, it's kind of right, if I've got that many sales and not many returns and not much stock coming in, what would that have to be in year two? So you start with yourself like that, where you want to be, then you understand you've got to hire three more people, you've got to have this much more space and you're able to plot it out.

And I really love that format. That's really the most that we've got from it. We mainly sat and so me and my mum are very different people. And what the sessions actually ended up being is us sitting, trying to work out the thing that we're talking about at the time. So it became a bit of a counselor, which I'm glad we had it, cause I don't think we would've kept on going so long. And you know, my mum is absolutely fantastic at what she does, but I think I'm more risky, a lot more risky and she likes things, worked out a lot more. So we would clash a lot on and you know, have a go, I just want to do this. And then she'd be like, just write it on the back of the fag packet Alice, she would always say or she would say, you want the moon on a stick.

And I think when you're mother and daughter it leans a bit more into the PB stuff. When you're mother and daughter, you don't have that boundary and it's so hard with family. The best thing about working with family is you're like go all in. You'll be there. You put a million percent into it. It's not like it's five o'clock, I'm clocking off, I'm going home. But the worst thing about it is that quite often you don't have that filter, so you just say what you think and it just yeah ended up just like we would just all do a lot. And it just got too much after eight years. I wanted my mum back, you know? So that was one of the big things that, that was a big factor there. What other factors as well? Lots of factors, you know, it took a long time to to really come to the decision. it took years.

And one of the plans I had was that I wanted to do other things and I didn't feel like that was gonna happen because that business was so big. It was all encompassing. And we've been able to do new stuff in the way we've set this up. I wanted to work with Andrew again and that hadn't worked out in that business because of the family dynamics, to be honest. I mean, imagine working with your wife and your mother in law, she's working with her son in law and her daughter and the mum are disagreeing on things, all that dynamic. It gets complicated, especially when you're growing fast and it's very high, high-octane high stress, high pressure. So yeah, it was horrific. I actually went out of the country when it was going through, when I sold my share.

Eight years of your life with your mum, like to then know that, it's exciting, obviously you're excited with like, Oh, I'm just, I've got my mum back. I can start a new business with all this going on, but wow. You've put all of yourself into that.

Yeah, it was, it was awful to be honest, but I'm glad I did it as I read this article where somebody said people used to ask them all the time. God, do you regret leaving, like exiting that business? And he said, I'm so glad I did it. And I'm so glad that I exited it and went on to do something else because sometimes you just get, you know, what I was talking about with like what you enjoy. I just think for your own health, sometimes for your own sanity you have to make very uncomfortable decisions and for me, you know, that conflict for so long. It's hard, you know, how long can you go along with that?

How can you physically go along with that every day or every week? And like I say, there were other factors in it. It wasn't just that. And you know, my mum is fantastic at what she does. But it was just the right time for me. But in terms of like the mentoring side of things, to be honest, we didn't have much access other than the growth accelerator. I think we did it for about a year, maybe once a month so we probably had about 12 sessions. And that was more of a counseling session, which is important. I think, I think that's important if you working with someone. Kind of like relationship counseling, isn't it. But I think mentors can be incredible and can fasttrack you. But I think you'd probably get similar type of thing from being in this group as well. So yeah.

Thank you. Thank you for that. Cause I know how much the guys get out of each other. I know how much they helped each other. I mean, when lockdown happened, Alice, we have trained every day cause we were so lost and it was only because I don't know, 20 of our members decided to do an hours training for the, for the rest of the membership. It was extraordinary. So we, we got to see different sides of one another. We got to learn new things in the time, which was extremely difficult, you know? So we are about our community and learning and, and keeping ourselves healthy and loving our businesses. And honestly, everything that you've said this morning, we're all hanging out on all of your words. I mean, you've done an hour and five for us. I'm going to let you go because otherwise I will keep you here all day.

I want you to come into the membership and I want you to be in with us every day. You know I couldn't agree more with everything you've said, and you're just such an inspiration. You've given us your time and come and talked to us so frankly and honestly about what it's really like, that's the kind of mentorship we need. Cause how many will stand there and say, well, you know, you do this, you do that. You're like me, but none of us are like you, we are like ourselves. And to just your frankness, your fondness has been incredible in your honesty. And I knew, I knew that's what you would give us. Cause that's what I heard when I heard you speak those years ago. So everybody who's listening, we've got to give, can you just start putting in the comments, just all your thanks and your love for Alice, just, if she comes back here that you can read.

How amazing she's been for us this morning. I'm inspired. Thank you for your time. Iona, so inspirational, uplifting and practical. I love hearing from female entrepreneurs with proper real world experience of success in business. It's this is what you've done for our membership, me this morning, anybody who watches on playback. So we're just so entirely, you're just Mint, you are! I'm not just saying that, you are!

I'm just going to record that and play it back tonight when I'm lying in bed and I can't sleep and that little voice goes, what did I even say on that video?

It's just what comes in. You're just like, Oh, you just look, did you just look a bit stupid? How did you come across all of that stuff? So

Honestly why would you do that? You know that, I mean, I'm reading this stuff about, you know, it's been amazing. Danielle's now looking at a fulfillment center, thanks for your time. Good luck with your three businesses, epic stuff, Alice. Thank you so much for your time and your honesty. So when you, when you go home and you overthink, please, will you just read this feed and just look

Definitely I'm going to join the group. Thank you so much, actually. And this is not a plug. I did not plan on doing this, but we're actually going to be doing fulfillment for small businesses. So just if you do want anything, give me a shout because we're getting all that sorted.

So Danielle, if Danielle finds you on LinkedIn and connects with you. I'll give Danielle your email. If Danielle, if you and Liza, I know you've got your warehouse in the bottom of your house and all the rest of it, but to know that you're doing that, that would be of interest for some of our members. So I'll pass that on to them as well. I'm like, you've got 60 people telling you how inspirational it's been.

Thank you for watching this. And you know, I hope that you can take something from it. And I just want to reiterate, I was a teaching assistant. I don't have anything in particular that was going to say that I was going to do this. I just kept on going. It's determination. Anybody, I genuinely believe, anyone can do anything. I mean, yes, you do have to study to kind of be a brain surgeon and so, but I just want to reiterate that if I can do it, literally, you guys can do it. You can grow and you can do something that you love. So thank you so much for having me Nicola and thanks for running the group. Cause it just sounds

so amazing what you do and, and you're a total lifeline for certain people, you know, through all of this and you put a hell of a lot of work into this, you know, to do a hundred sessions, that's consistency.

I'm completely blushing and I can't cope with all that, but thank you so much. The Minties are a lifeline for each other. All of us and everybody's Mint.

I'm going to end this call for us. I'm just gonna have a quick two minutes with the Alice at the end. Thank you so much for watching. Thank you for watching a hundred. There's loads of you on this call, who've basically been with us this whole time. And honestly, can you imagine a hundred of these to watch. Eeh goodness!

So bye. I'm going to give you the Zoom wave, cause we always have the zoom wave even though we're not even on Zoom. It's just you an incredible, thank you so much. Right? Much. Love everybody. See you later.