

Girls Night #230: Why I Started an Etsy Shop and Why I Almost Quit — with Stephanie May Wilson

0:00:05 - Stephanie

Hey friends, welcome to Girls Night. I'm Stephanie May Wilson and I'm so happy that you're here. Each week, I have a girlfriend over and we talk through one of the biggest questions we have about our lives as women. We're talking about friendships and faith and relationships and self-confidence, about our calling in life and how to live every bit of our lives to the full. Life is so much better and easier and absolutely more fun when we navigate it together as girlfriends, and I cannot wait to get started.

Hey friends, I am so excited to be sitting here with you for our second ever Girls Night solo episode. I did my first one earlier this season and I told you guys that I was wildly nervous about it, and I'm so grateful that the feedback has been really good. You guys said, yes, let's keep doing this more. And so here we are. I want to give the just I don't maybe a caveat or like warning here at the beginning that I'm still really new at this Interviewing I can do. That Solo podcast episode makes me nervous, especially because I'm sitting here and I'm looking at video also. By the way, if you're listening on audio, did you know that we have a YouTube channel? We do so. I'm sitting here I'm filming this and I'm just still really new at this. I don't totally know what I'm doing, but actually that's really the theme of today's episode, and so I'm just throwing that out there right now that I'm a beginner at this and I'm a firm believer that it's okay to be a beginner, and we're going to talk about that a lot more, but just bear with me as I get some practice in at doing these solo episodes. Also, if you're watching the YouTube video, you may have seen I have this crazy bruise on my arm. I lifted my arm up and then realized, oh, you can see that and I feel like I probably have to address the giant bruise in the room.

On Halloween, we were taking the girls out trick-or-treating and right as we walked out the door I stepped off of our side, like the side of our porch, and it's just like a half-foot step. But my ankle rolled and I came crashing to the ground and my arm came crashing down onto our porch, onto like the corner of our brick porch, and I just stayed down for a while. I was like that was a very hard fall and the girls are standing there like not sure what to do. Like, mom, are you okay? And I was mostly okay, except for as I'm getting up and I'm like gathering the girls and we're getting ready to go trick-or-treating, I'm realizing that my arm feels kind of funny and I looked down and it is starting to grow Like it looked like my arm swallowed a baseball. It was the craziest, grossest sorry for the great details thing I have maybe ever done to my body, but it we got some like compression on it and some ice on it and it shrank and nothing was broken, although we did spend most of that night going. Is my arm broken or is my arm not broken? Not broken, but I do have a really crazy bruise and I will say thank you big shout out to my Halloween costume and the sweatshirt I was wearing underneath it for saving my arm, probably because I think if I wasn't wearing a narwhal costume when this fall happened, that we would have been talking about more damage. So, anyway, just take that mental picture with you of me crashing to the

ground in narwhal costume and now my arm looks crazy and bruised. So, anyway, just a little explanation for those of you watching the YouTube channel who are thinking what in the world is wrong with your arm stuff, anyway. So that's, that's that story, but really I.

So this week, when this episode comes out this week on Friday, we're doing something. I'm doing something really big, something exciting, something that I've been thinking about forever. So here's my big announcement. So in just a few days, on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, I am throwing open the doors to an all new shop, something I've been working on for more than a year now, something I'm so excited about and something I cannot wait to share with you. It's called the Girls Night Gift Shop, which is so fun to be getting to tell you my Girls Night community about this. And it's a newly built, slash, newly reimagined shop that I really have been working on for ages, and my hope is that it can be the go to HQ for all things friendship, meaningful, thoughtful, best friend gifts and matching shirts to wear with your friends at your next Girls Night or Girls Weekend or Girls Trip. Pause here for a second. Don't buy gifts for your girlfriends yet. I promise you I have you covered.

But leading up to Black Friday, here in our community and here on the podcast, I wanted to tell you the story of how the shop came to be. This has been a dream of mine for years and years, and years, and it's been a passion project of mine for, honestly, probably about 18 months at this point. But along the way, I got so discouraged in the pursuit of this dream that I came this close to giving up. And so today I want to tell you why, what happened and what I learned from it. You guys ready? Okay, so, backing up, for as long as I can remember, I have wanted to have a little gift shop.

I think probably the origin of this dream was maybe in fourth grade, in the height of the Beanie Baby craze. You guys, most of you were going to know what I'm talking about. My mom and I opened up a little shop in my class called the Beanie Baby Stuff Store Very creative, but I had little sleeping bags for them and like collars and leashes and stuff and some of the stuff I didn't quite know how to make, and so I looped my mom into being like my production assistant, flash, doing most of the production. But it was such a fun thing and I will say that it was so successful that we got shut down. Actually, really, my teacher was like this is a distraction, stephanie, I love that, you love this, but we're going to have to close it down. So, anyway, I think that, but I think that that really is kind of the origin of this dream of mine.

I have always loved making beautiful things and gifts for people that I love and curating and creating those things, and so it's just been a dream of mine for like as long as I can remember to have a little gift shop. I've had an online store. You guys know this, but I've had an online shop Ever since my book my first book, the Lipstick Gospel came out. We got the shop up and running just days before Thanksgiving it was back in 2014. And we got about 100 orders that first year, which was so exciting, and I enlisted my whole family to help me pack up orders of books. And these are prints that we made, and it was just this dream come true in 1000 different ways.

A few years later, as this podcast, as Girls Night was just getting started, I decided to make some sweatshirts that we could wear as a Girls Night community. They're the original ones, are gray and they are so comfy. I literally live my whole life in them, except for right now, but usually I'm wearing them and they say my favorite night is Girls Night and we've done a couple different iterations of them over the years, but I love them because they're a celebration of friendship and it's been so fun to get to see that sweatshirt become sort of the unofficial Girls Night uniform for women all over the world really. And so that's really how my that's what my kind of shop has looked like for the last handful of years. It's been resources like my books and my journals and my courses, things to help you navigate decisions and transitions and relationships, but then a few like Girls Night sweatshirts tossed in and it's been kind of the hub for any, basically anything that I make. And that's been okay, that's been fine.

But then last summer I had an idea that I just haven't been able to shake. You guys have probably heard me talk a little bit about this, but you probably didn't know what I was feeling as I was talking about it and so that's really like you may have heard part of the story before. I know you haven't heard the whole thing. So this new idea was that my best friends and I were planning a girls trip last summer and we decided that we needed matching girls trip t shirts. Not wanted needed. We wanted to take fun photos together in our matching girls shirts, but girls trip shirts.

But we also wanted sort of a keepsake or like a memento that we could take home with us, a reminder of each other and our time together, and something that could help us feel connected even when we're far apart. My best friends, this particular group in particular, live in Colorado, and so we are like I'm trying to think I think it's like almost 2000,. At least a thousand. Anyway, you geography people are going to have to correct me, but we're like 16 hours, a 16 hour drive from each other. And so I just I wanted something that we could wear together and take fun pictures and you know, whereas we were going to the lake, but also something that could just remind us of our time together and of each other and sort of connect us. Our time together is so precious. I mean, I think any time together as friends is precious, but between the four of us that we're going, we have four full time jobs, three husbands, seven kids and four dogs and a cat a mean cat, sorry, michelle. So I mean, getting time together is really like a miracle to get us all on an airplane and to the same place at the same time is is not a small feat, and so we wanted to mark that that occasion.

But we found out that girls trip shirts are actually really pretty hard to find. All of the shirts that we found said things like girls trip cheaper than therapy, which okay, but one is it cheaper than? Maybe, I guess, if you added months of there, whatever. But that shirt was pretty off brand for us, considering that all of us are huge fans of therapy and two of the four of us are actually licensed therapists. Or we found shirts that said things like the girls are drinking again, or I'm the bad influencer, I'm the one who will get us out of jail, or whatever. And that's just not. That's just not what we're looking for.

So we ended up settling on some shirts that were fine. We weren't pretty, we weren't particularly excited about, and it was on that trip, while wearing that shirt, that I had an idea. I thought, if I

can't find these shirts, if I can't find the thing that I'm looking for, why don't I make them? I know a little bit about printing an apparel from making our girls trip sweatshirts. So I thought, like how hard can this be? It turns out pretty hard, but I didn't see that coming. So I got started on these shirts, on these designs right away. I found inspiration everywhere. I was dreaming up a thousand different designs.

I first worked with my friend, Amber, who is amazing. She's done. She did the book cover for my book, *Between Places*. We've worked together for a long time. She's incredible. So she and I worked together and I sent her so much inspiration and we worked back and forth. Then I found that I was still tinkering, even on my own, with practice. The more I practiced actually making designs by myself, the better I got at it, the more I was able to actually make with my hands the things that I was seeing in my brain. It was just such a cool creative process. So not only was I working with Amber and designing a million things, Amber is Copperheart Creative. If anyone needs a great designer, she's awesome. She's in the Nashville area. But I also ordered a zillion different samples.

When I tell you that Carl was like Stephanie, what is happening? The postman was at our door every single day. I mean, I still to this day, I'm wearing basically entirely girl strip shirts because I have so many of them. I'm like what am I going to do with all these shirts. I have piles and piles and piles of them. I wanted to. I wore them and wash them, wore them and wash them, and I just wanted to make sure they were absolutely perfect, both for my girlfriends and for yours. So I really worked at this for months.

Once I had a collection ready, I had to figure out where to put it. I had first gone to Etsy to look for our girls' strip shirts. I've bought things from Etsy over the years so I decided let's try Etsy, let's make Etsy our little home for this girls' trip specific shop. I just could not wait to share the things that I was making. So I got everything connected. I learned how to use a new software, a new I don't know what you call it program, and then I press, publish and shared about the shop for the first time with you guys. I think I sent an email about it and probably shared it on social media.

Basically the second, this idea was out of my head and into the world. That started to creep in. This is something that I've noticed happens for me with basically anything I'm working on. My friend Emily and I talk about. We call it the entrepreneurship cycle or I don't know. Maybe we should call it the cycle of shame or something, or fear, because we start out with an idea and it sounds so exciting and so fun and we're working on it and we're pumped and we're ready to go. Then, basically the second it gets out in the world, we feel this total wave of am I good enough for this? And probably not, I can't do it and I shouldn't have even tried, and just this deep shame and it takes a while for us to get through that, to get back up to the part where we're ready to work on it again, where we think that this is a good idea. Again we're out of the vulnerability of it. Really it's a vulnerability hangover, like Renee Brown talks about, and I've known this about everything I've ever done, everything I've ever done anything scary really, and so anything worthwhile I know.

For me personally, I feel really confident about things from far away. So when I'm dreaming about a trip or experience or applying for a job or just honestly, anything that's going to cost writing a book, anything that's going to cost me anything, I am really excited about it from a distance. But then, as it gets closer, I start to shrink and I start to feel more scared and I feel the vulnerability of this thing. I feel the risk that I'm taking and putting myself out there like this. I've learned over the years that I basically just have to keep going because the version of me with some distance from a decision is really brave and has a really good big picture view about what I want and who I want to be and where I want to go, and I'm able to make brave and bold decisions. But then I know that as it gets closer it's like a mountain. From far away it looks small and scalable, I guess, and then as you get close to it you go oh my gosh, this thing is so tall. And so I've learned I can't listen to myself, I can't listen to the things that my mind is telling me from up close, because whenever I'm about to have to do something, I don't want to do it anymore. But I think I kind of forgot all of that with this, because that's a hard even though I know that, to be true about myself it's hard to hold on to that truth when I'm really scared, and that's what I was feeling about this idea.

So the second I started, the second I pressed publish, doubt started to creep in and I just was doubting everything. I started thinking like what if this isn't a good idea after all? Or what if nobody likes the things that I've made? Or what if I'm not good at this? Or like, really, what made me think that I was qualified to do this in the first place? Like, I don't have a degree in this, I don't have experience in this, I'm not Like who told me that I was allowed to do this? So that's what was happening inside my head.

What was happening outside my head is that the shop did fine. It was basically as good of an outcome as anyone could kind of expect for something that's new and that no one knew. I was working on this. There wasn't a good. No one knew to expect this, no one I don't know. I just kind of threw it out there and was like hey, here it is, and so I got good feedback, but it just wasn't like an instant success by any means One. It was new, which we'll talk about the things I've learned from this experience in a little bit, but really one of the issues that I ran into was that it turns out that, while basically most of us were dreaming about going on a girls trip. Not all of us had one in the works, and so that was kind of one of the roadblocks I ran into that, just like it wasn't a runaway success right away.

And the fact that the shop wasn't this instant success swirled together with the doubts that I was feeling. From the second I pressed publish and before long I had convinced myself that this was a terrible idea and that I should quit. And so I did. I walked away, I stopped working on it, I gave up and I tucked this dream and months and months of hard work in a bazillion t-shirt samples kind of into a drawer and just tried to forget about it. And anytime I would think about this thing, I just I found myself like kicking myself for wasting time on something so silly. But the thing is that while my confidence in the idea and my ability to execute it totally disappeared, my heart for the idea, the thing that got me to that place in the first place, of like I want to make this. I think this is something cool that didn't go away. The thing is I really, more than pretty much anything, I love friendship and I love travel, and time with my friends is my favorite form of self care and little keepsakes from my friends bring me so much encouragement and hope and joy, like a mug or a

key chain or a matching t-shirt that I've gotten from a friend feels like a hug. It feels like this physical reminder that I'm not alone in the world, even when my friends are thousands of miles away.

Also, every year about this time I realize that I have the hardest time buying gifts for my girlfriends. I usually need like several of them. It's not like buying gifts for Carl my husband is like its own beast. It's really hard. But buying girlfriend gifts it's like you don't have to do it once. You need like a couple of things and all your friendships are different. All your friends are different and you want them all to be special. But it's not like you have like 100 bucks to spend per friend or at least I don't and then everything's like kind of like you have to go hey, do I want to get them something useful, like that's kind of boring? Or do I want to get them something that they really want but haven't bought for themselves? Okay, well, there's like no surprise to that. Or do I want to get them something that's like nice but like kind of generic, I don't know, and that just says to me, that says like I was thinking of you and I wanted to give you something, but I couldn't really find anything that meaningful. So here's this, and I just have always wanted to do better than that, and I've always had a really hard time finding great girlfriend gifts, and so not only so, I loved this idea. The place that this came from within me and in my life was so real and genuine and something that I'll be passionate about forever.

But not only did I love this idea, I loved working on it. I truly was overflowing with ideas. I would be on my phone constantly being like, oh, and I want to make this, oh, and I want to make this, oh and I want to make this, and it should say this or it should look like this. And I was finding inspiration everywhere, like the design printed on my coffee cup, the pattern on my paper coffee cup, or like music lyrics or designs throughout history, or like a particular style that was, I don't know, like 70s appraise ski gear, like I don't know. I just I was getting ideas everywhere and overflowing with excitement about this and I think honestly, it's probably the most like creatively lit up I've ever felt was working on this and free, and I think that part of the thing that made me feel so free about it basically before I shared about it was that I'm not a professional. I'm not a professional designer Like there really is no reason that I should be awesome at this and so I think that that gave me the freedom to just make things that I like, and the more I practiced, the more the things that I was making looked like the things in my head and that just was such an exciting process. So, anyway, I love the idea for the shop and I loved working on it, and I really worked at it for months and months and months and never got sick of it. It just was so fun for me.

But despite all of that, I quit. I quit because it didn't take off right away and because it wasn't a runaway success and because I felt so vulnerable in putting a piece of myself out there, even though I've been doing it for years. You'd think I'd be over that by now, but I'm not. I just felt so vulnerable and so nervous about the whole thing and I felt so shaky offering this thing out into the world that I thought was good, but then all of a sudden, I wasn't sure and it felt like I didn't get this overwhelming like yes, this is awesome. Back in response, and so I like instantly kind of tucked it away, and not only did I quit, but I felt embarrassed to have tried.

I think the thing is that I didn't wanna be caught caring about something that other people thought was dumb. I didn't wanna be caught trying unless I knew that something was gonna succeed. And you know, I don't really know why, I don't feel that in every part of my life, but I did in this and I felt it really fiercely. I really let the fear of what other people might think trump what I think, and what I think is that I love this. I sat there frozen in this defeat for the longest time, for months and months and months, and the reason that I wanna share this story with you is because I know that I'm not the only one. I know that all of us have something that we're dreaming about, the dreaming of something we wanna do in our life, and I think a lot of us are afraid that it's dumb and that we're not good enough and that nobody's gonna like it. So I think that a lot of times those fears keep us from starting. A lot of times it's you know, we just keep this idea tucked away in our head because we're afraid of what might happen to it if we bring it out into the world. But the other thing is, you know, I think for others of us, like me, you know we do the thing, we write the book, we sign up for the class, we go on the date. You know we like do the thing.

But basically the second we're out, away from the crowd, in the open, with our heart on our sleeve. It's so scary and vulnerable and we just it's so hard to just stand there to be seen out there by yourself loving the thing that you love and wondering if other people are gonna love it too, and it's like that moment is so vulnerable and so scary that we just can't do it. We just have to walk away. We have to stop that discomfort. That's how I felt and I just I know I'm not the only one, but I didn't stay there and I'm really glad I didn't stay there and I don't want you to have to stay there either. If you're feeling stuck in the same place that I spent so much time in. I wanna get you out. I think it's just time, you know. So here's how I kind of got through this moment. Here's the thing that shifted.

So one morning I had a really small idea that sort of snowballed, it sparked a different idea, and a different idea, and a bigger one, and a bigger one. So it started because I was thinking about my, the shop. I do have the shop that I did survive the vulnerability long enough to keep out in the world. It's Stephanie May Wilson shopcom and again, it's where we have like our journals and devotional and my books and where we've had our girls night sweatshirt or my favorite night is girls night sweatshirt for years now. So it's less vulnerable because it's been there for a while. But I was thinking about the shop and I was thinking about just kind of the way that I have things organized in our corner the internet and it started to make kind of. The more I thought about it, the more it felt like it sort of made no sense what I had in there. The fact that it is sort of a catch-all for just like anything that I make makes it kind of hard to describe and hard to be like. This is what this is about, or this is what this is for, and I was getting just like a little bit stuck yeah, being able to describe it, being able to share about it, because it was sort of a collection of just all kinds of things.

I don't think I've told this story. I'm wondering if I told it last time, but anyway, you might hear it again. So when we first moved to Nashville, we bought this little house and it was in this up-and-coming neighborhood that was like still had a ways to go. It was like kind of an interesting collection of houses and people and all kinds of things. Well, so our neighbor had this house that had been there for I don't know 50 years or something, and you could tell that the

house started at one size but then they built onto it and built onto it and built onto it and it was sort of this like a little bit of like a Frankenstein house. The cherry on top was the fact that in their garage they had a detached garage out back and on top of the garage it was like a flat roof. On top of the garage they had like battlements. Like on top of a castle, you know, it's like they had sort of a fence around it but it looked like a castle. They had like a bridge to the main part of the house and they had a hot tub on the roof and it was just such a funny, like random thing to be next door in our neighborhood that we just would always look at it and go like how did it end up like that? And it really was how a lot of things happen in all of our lives and in my life, where like one thing leads to the next, leads to the next, and then you just sort of add a little on here and add a little on here, and a couple of years later you look and go.

I didn't really have a plan, like I didn't have a long-term plan, when I made this. I've just sort of been doing a little bit at a time and so that's kind of what I was thinking about. My little shop was like it's just sort of a collection of kind of some random things and I think when you don't have a really specific vision for something, it kind of can be. When something's a catch-all, it actually stifles your creativity, whereas if you have a really specific vision for something, I think it opens up creativity a lot. It's like really counterintuitive, but I think that that's really true.

And so I was trying to think of, like, how can I organize this a little bit better? And then I thought, what if I have two shops? What if I just kind of split them apart and I have one that's for my books and my guides and my resources and another that's for our girls' trip sweatshirts or girls' night sweatshirts and you can tell I've been talking about girls' trips forever. So another one that's for our girls' night sweatshirts, maybe it's like a girls' night shop, just whatever it is. Whatever we have for the podcast and other stuff is just like my books. And then I thought, well, if I'm gonna make a new home for our girls' night sweatshirts, I could put other things in there too, like, what about best friend gifts? And I immediately was thinking about how hard of a time I have finding best friend gifts. And then I was like and then if we're gonna have girls' trip or girls' see, I did it again girls' night sweatshirts and best friend gifts, maybe we should have girls' trip shirts, like the ones I was working on for so long and sort of before I knew it, there it was.

It was a whole new idea and it was the same in a lot of ways, but it was new in a lot of ways too, because it was bigger than what I'd originally dreamed up. It was bigger than what I'd dreamed up the first time and the second time and the third time, and I realized it wasn't necessarily about girls' nights or girls' trips. It was about friendship. I realized that this little shop doesn't just have to be a place that you go if you like cozy sweatshirts and you like the girls' night podcast, but it can be a place where you come to find physical symbols of unity for your friends, gifts that will remind them of who they are and what they're capable of, and the fact that you're in their corner every step of the way. I thought this shop could be a celebration of women and connection and the beautiful adventure that life is when we live it together.

And with that I was ready to try again. I was ready to pull all these ideas out from the drawer that I had stuffed there in fear and embarrassment over the last several months. I was ready to kind of come out of hiding and maybe own up to the fact that I really love this and I really care about it and that I hope other people do too. But even if they don't, the thing that I thought to

myself as I was kind of peeking my head out again was you know what, even if this never turns into anything or becomes this like big, successful shop, I love this and that in itself makes it worthwhile.

And so I got back to work. I pulled together all of well. I took our girls' night sweatshirts out of my regular shop and started building a new shop. I had to figure out what I wanted to call it. It wasn't necessarily about girls' trips, it was, but it was gifts and so I sort of combined a couple things together that I had been like dreaming about and came up with the girls' night gift shop. Pretty straightforward it kind of has a beanie baby stuff store, fourth grade stuff and you ring to it. But I like it. Girls' night has been my thing forever and gifts for friends, and so that's what I'm calling it the girls' night gift shop. So I gathered all of the girls' night gear that we've had over the years.

I've made so many things, things that you guys have seen, things you haven't. I have designs that like never made, never saw the light of day. I have things that, like, I have an art print that my best friend hand drew she's this incredible artist and I've never gotten to share it before because I just kind of didn't get there and kind of didn't have time and was also like too scared and also it didn't really fit with the other stuff I was doing. And then also, I had all of these girls' trip designs and girls' weekends and like customizable shirts that you can put your, like the name of your group and when you were established. You guys have met these friends of mine because I've had them on the show before, but I have a group called the Pocket People and so we have a version of the shirt that says the Pocket People established 2014. And so, like, I found that design and you know, I just I've been working on all of these things and I finally had a home for them and I finally had a direction for them meaningful gifts for your best friends and matching shirts to wear with your favorite people. And that works whether you're, you know, doing a girls' night or a girls' weekend or a girls' trip, or even if you're getting together for Christmas and are as into matching Christmas shirts as I am, which we'll talk about in a few minutes.

So I started pulling this all together, but I want to share some of the like specific things that I learned in the process of doing this, because I've learned some lessons along the way, in like kind of coming back to this idea that I know I'm going to be thinking about forever, but anyway, so I spent, I spent. I've spent the last several months pulling things out of hiding and pulling myself out of hiding and creating again, and I've been having such a good time and it just feels like I've been able to celebrate friendship and travel and the adventure that we get to go on together when we do life together, and it's been really, really fun and really I'm going to be opening it up on Black Friday and I wanted to tell you guys the backstory before. I did share it because one, because I think it helps. I think that it helps to. I don't know if it's like professional or good speaking etiquette or style or whatever, but like if you get up on stage and you say I'm a little nervous, it just kind of breaks the ice and that's how. That's what I feel like I just need to do with this.

I'm so totally nervous. And I know that basically the second I put this out in the world again, all those doubts are going to crash back in, because that's just how it is. It's going to be vulnerable

to share this again, just like it was when I sort of stuck my toe in the water last time before I pulled it back out again. So I know that I'm going to be feeling vulnerable and I think that having you guys know that I feel vulnerable and having you guys know that I'm scared, it just helps me for some reason. It just helps to say, hey, I'm nervous, but here I am anyway.

And then also, the more I thought about this, the more I realized like I'm not the only one feeling this way. You know, like we talked about, I know we all have stuff where we're feeling small and nervous and like either we started but we are just totally going to quit because we're pretty sure that we already are seeing signs of failure and we want to stop before we get to them, or we're too scared to even start because we just, we just can't take even thinking about the vulnerability that this endeavor is going to take. But I've already, even though, even though it's not even out in the world. Yet, even though it still totally could fail, I've found so much purpose and joy and reward even in doing it anyway, in pursuing it anyway, even if it fails, and I just want to encourage you in that too.

I don't want us to live small. I don't want us to avoid hard things. I don't want us to I mean, at least for me. I know that I would rather fall on my face, but know that I tried and know that I didn't. The very best that I could then spend the rest of my life wondering what could have happened if I would have given it a shot. Because that's the truth.

We actually don't know what's going to happen. If you go on that date, if you write that book, if you apply for that job, if you sign up for that class, if you build that girl's night gift shop, you actually don't know what's going to happen. It could be fine, it could be okay. You have a couple of wonderful customers like maybe my mom will buy a t-shirt and that'll be so nice of her, and that can be it, or it could be a runaway success. You really have no, you think you know what's going to happen. You think it's going to be a worst case scenario, but it really might not. It really might be best case scenario, and you just don't know until you try.

And I just want to be the kind of person who tries and I want to be the kind of person that does things that I love, whether or not they're outwardly successful, but just because they matter to me and I want that to be okay, and so as I practice that in my own life, I want to invite you into it too. So I want to share a couple like really practical things that I've learned in giving this another try and in quitting the first time and standing back up. And I want to share these things like before the shop's even open, because I'll probably be too nervous to talk about it once it's out in the world again. I'll have to, like I don't know, turn off my phone for a few minutes and just remind myself of the things I know were true. So I won't be in as good of a place to really talk about this, I don't think, just for the first little bit once it's out in the world again. But here are some things that I've learned.

One of the things is that you don't have to be good enough when you start something. Starting is how you get good enough. That's one of the doubts that I found myself believing really strongly was that, like I'm not good enough to do this. I don't have a degree in design, and that is a little bit tricky because my wonderful husband actually does. He's, like, I'm convinced, one of the best designers in the entire world, Julie and so, sitting next to him creating things, when

I'm like, oh my gosh, if he just sneezed, he could make something so much better. It's intimidating, but we all have those people. It's like, maybe we're not married to them, but it's, you know, a friend, it's someone we see on Instagram, it's whatever. Like we see people who seem to be good enough to do the thing we want to do, and they probably have some like I don't know letters after their name or a degree, or have taken a class or have more experience than we do, and so it's like, why would I even start? I'm not as good as they are, but they weren't good at the beginning either. Nobody is, and it's through the doing that we get better, and sort of a.

I think, instead of looking at something and saying am I good enough to do this. Maybe we look instead and say do I like this, do what does this bring me life? Is this something that I enjoy? And if it is, it's worth trying and it's worth practicing until you get better at it. The second thing that I have learned through this is that good things take time. You will get better at this as you go, and so will your idea, and also, basically, nothing takes off right away, and so that I so using that as a metric for is this successful? Looking and saying is this does this reach some invisible bar of success immediately. That's like just the wrong way to think about it, because nothing is going to. If you look at anyone who's successful at something and ask them how long it took them to get there, everyone is going to say it took years. Everyone is going to say it took years.

We see this a lot in Nashville, living in Nashville because we get to see so many awesome people pursuing careers as, like, country artists or, you know, musicians or with a lot of creative people around here, and it's crazy because when you see a new country artist who is like exploded on the scene, you think, wow, they just like made it this year, like maybe they started last year and they made it this year and it's like absolutely not. They have been working at this and opening for other people and playing writers rounds and writing music for other people. That made other people more successful and some even, like you know, playing on the side of the road somewhere, you know, for tips. Like people have been working at this for years and years and years. They might have a degree in it. You know that they got 15 years ago. Like it really is. Nobody is an overnight success and I think the people who are if someone does happen to like, go viral right when they start. I don't think that they'll have the experience to be able to sustain it. So they might have like a really great moment in the sun, but it's not going to last. Basically, anything that's worthwhile takes time to build. I know really it has. It has for me.

When I started this podcast you guys might have heard this story I was really nervous about it too. I thought I like the idea of this. I like the idea of getting to be able to have conversations with the women in our community instead of like doing it from behind a blog post or something, but I just didn't know if I could do the technology of it. I didn't know if I would be good at it. I didn't know if anyone would want to listen. I didn't know if anyone would want this from me. I didn't know that I was going to really like it, like I just basically I didn't know anything.

All I knew is that I was curious about this and kind of wanted to try it, and so the phrase that got me through that initial period was the idea that it's okay to be a beginner, and I wrote that on a sticky note and I put it on my podcast mic that I got off of Amazon, and I just reminded myself of that Every time I would go to record an episode. I reminded myself of the fact that anyone who's

good at this now wasn't good at this at the beginning. Everyone was bad at this when they got started and it was through the doing that they got better. And it was after, like it was through doing it for a long time that they got better. And that really is true about the podcast. I got to find out that I do like it and then I love it and that I was okay at it, but I got better. But that's taken a long time.

I've been podcasting for, I think, seven years now. The opportunities that I'm having now the, the invitations I'm getting, the opportunity yeah, the really the opportunities that I'm getting now as a podcaster are things I couldn't even have dreamt of at the beginning, and it's because I just wasn't there yet. And it's been through walking through these seven years that I've been able to get to this place. It just takes time. So that's the second thing. Good things take time. The third thing is I've learned that sometimes you have to pivot. You don't always have to continue the way that you started.

I found that having just girls' trip shirts was too narrow. Like I said, we have a lot of women in our community who love to go on a trip with their friends, but very few of us, like, actually have one planned or in the works, and so when I started creating right at the beginning, before I got so intimidated and discouraged that I quit I made a shirt that just said Weekending on it, and it was. You know, it was the kind of thing you don't have to have a ticket to like a plane ticket to be able to wear, and that was one of the things that actually, like, did take off a little bit, and so that that told me that maybe, maybe I was on to something a little bit, but I needed to tweak it in order for it to really like serve people the way that I wanted to. And so that's something that I've been really embracing over the last few months is like what could this be? What if I open it up just a little bit more? What if it's not just girls' trips but it's all kinds of gathering and friendship moments and, again, friendship gifts, because they're so hard to find.

And the thing that I've been learning is that pivoting isn't a sign of failure. It's actually a sign that you're paying attention and it's how you get better as you go. You start somewhere and you see how it goes and then you change what needs to be changed and you keep going from there. And that's something that, like, I think I knew in my head, but I hadn't had to put it into practice the way that I have with this quite as specifically, and I think that if I would have known that, really known that ahead of time, I just don't know that I would have quit right away. I think I would have given it another try, or given it a different kind of a try, and I think that would have been a really good thing.

I want to go back to the point about good things taking time, because that's something else that I've been thinking about a lot when it comes to this shop is, I don't know, that the people who succeed in the world, at whatever the thing is Like it could be climbing a ladder in your chosen career, it could be dating, it could be like whatever, I don't know that the people who succeed are actually the best. I think they might be the people with that are either the most stubborn or that have the most like endurance, because things take time. I think the people who succeed are the ones who didn't quit when it didn't go well right away. I wonder if they're the people who, just like, kept giving it a shot, kept trying again, kept going, even though it was growing at a

pace that just like you could bear it, like it was watching grass grow so slow, but they just continued.

I think that, as I've been looking around, I'm seeing that the people who really do succeed are the ones that gave it a shot and kept giving it a shot and didn't give up right away, and that it's not even as much about talent or ability as it is about like just longevity and stubbornness sticking it out. And so that's another thing that I've been thinking about. Is like this thing that I really care about, that I really want to do well. May not do well right away, but if I keep working at it for the next seven years, seven years from now, it's most likely going to be a lot bigger than it is now. And that's probably the only way it's gonna be a lot bigger than it is now is if I give it that time and if I pivot as I need to and if I continue to practice and continue to get better. And so that's really the decision I've made for this. And again gosh, this feels so vulnerable to say out loud is that I like this enough to do it for a long time, and I like this enough, I enjoy this enough, I'm passionate enough about friendship and like symbols of connection really to give us the time that it needs. And so if, like my podcast, it takes seven years to be bigger than it is today, I mean it didn't. It grew little by little, but then okay, like I think, I think I like this enough to really give it that time, and so I'm here for the long haul, and so that's just one question that I would ask you about.

Whatever the thing is that you've been thinking about as we've been talking about this again, whether it is dating, whether it is pursuing a particular career, whether it is going back to school, whether it is writing a book, whether it is starting Etsy shop or something like I did, if you know that this is gonna take time, like what are you willing to give that time to? What are you willing to stick out for for a while, as long as you need to, in order for it to get to where you want it to go? Are you really willing to do the work? It may take a lot of bad first dates. It may take a lot of waiting, it may take a lot of time, a lot of kind of failing and trying again. But what in your? Like art, art is this worth it to you? Because that's what I've been finding is that it is. This is worth it to me to stick it out as long as I need to.

The last thing is so what if you fail? What if you actually fail? That's the question I've been asking myself a lot is like really, what if I totally fail at this? What if I actually put my weight in my heart and my all my creativity and focus behind this and and like really give it a go? And just, it's like crickets. Nobody likes that I've made I don't know like what really will. I have lost some time, I guess, but I really like the way I'm spending my time and so that doesn't really seem wasted, does it? And then the other thing is that even if you don't end up, even if you like change lanes, you still are gonna benefit from the progress you made along the way.

So an example is that I studied broadcast journalism in school and I have that's what my degree is in, and I was so positive that I wanted to be a news anchor or a TV reporter. That was just the path that I was sprinting down all the way through college and I was so sure that that's what I wanted to do. But then I had just a massive change of heart right before graduation. My life changed entirely. If you have read my book the lipstick gospel, you know that full story. But it just was clear to me almost in an instant that this actually wasn't what I was meant to do with my life, or at least not in that way.

And so, just a few weeks before graduation, I, like walked away and it took a totally different path into ministry and missions, and I think that if you would have talked to me in that moment, or if you would have looked at my decisions from the outside, you could have made the case that I just threw away my, my degree, that I just threw away or wasted four years of of work. I can see and I think there were there are times when I worried that I can see now, as I, you know, I'm sitting here talking into a microphone and looking into a camera, that none of this was wasted at all. And so that's what I mean by. You know, even if you have to change lanes, you've still made progress, and that's the case no matter what we're trying. If you, you know, through through building this shop, through designing these things, making these products, streaming up these Ideas, I'm learning how to do something new and I'm getting better at it. And so, even if this isn't like the ultimate final expression of that thing, those skills are transferable and so are yours. So there's one last like really practical thing I wanted to talk about, and that's I ended up in bringing this back in, in reimagining this Idea and building it into something new and putting together the girls night gift shop.

I Decided to not primarily build it on Etsy that's where I had it initially because I thought that, being in a marketplace where lots of people are looking for the thing that you've made, like I thought that that was a really great place to do this. What I found out, though, is that one nothing this is true for everything nothing on Etsy was fast. I was able to get some, you know, I was able to sell some shirts, but not a ton, and I really found out that it's pretty hard to be found On Etsy, at least in this kind of niche. That's the only reason they say that is just because I think my Expectations were misguided. You know, I thought, like here's a place where people are looking for what I'm making, and I'm going to make what I'm making and put them in this place, and everyone will find it, and that'll be so great, and I just could not Get seen. I just couldn't like Manage to show up when someone's searching for girls trip shirts. I couldn't manage to like have my things come up and I was watching, you know, all these YouTube videos and trying to figure it out, trying to figure out, like, what's the key, like, what am I doing wrong that's making it so that, like nobody can find my shirts, even if they're looking for them. And I couldn't really figure it out and I didn't. So. So what I decided was I didn't take down my Etsy shop. It still exists and if some day, you know, maybe, if I just need to give it more time, or, you know, if, like, the algorithm changes or what you know, whatever the elements are that make it what it is, so maybe someday my shirts will show up on Etsy, something will change and, magically, people that are looking for girls trip shirts will be able to find the ones that I've made. So I'm not gonna take it down.

I haven't taken it down, but I did decide to take a page out of the playbook written by our dear friend, miss Taylor Swift. You guys may know that her catalog of Masters, like original recordings of her songs, was purchased by scooter Bronn, by a guy that she didn't want to own them. She wanted to own them and he wouldn't sell them to her, and so she like basically didn't have control over this thing that she made, and so she decided to Re-record all of her songs and now, like she's almost done, I think, and she has Taylor's version, she has all of her songs re-recorded so that she owns every piece of it, and that's kind of the conclusion I came to was that I am working so hard to try to crack this code, to try to do Things exactly right to fit the way

that this you know Etsy platform works, so that my shirts can show up. But as I'm talking to people about how it works and learning the tricks that they've learned along the way, one of the things that kept coming up again and again and again was that it always seems to change and they feel so out of control over this thing that they've made, because the hands, like they're they're Destiny, I guess, is like in the hands of the people who are in charge of Etsy, like if Etsy goes away, so does their livelihood, and I really don't like that. And so my Etsy shop is still there. But that's why I decided to make the girls night gift shop my own shop. It's on Shopify. If anyone is like curious about e-commerce, that's where my other shop is also, but I decided to put on on Shopify so that I get to, so that it's mine, so that it's my land, my house, so that I'm not building this thing on borrowed ground and my like whether it does well or not is not based on the Etsy, like Etsy's mood kind of, if that makes sense. So that's just kind of a random thing. But something that's been really important as I've been walking this road is I want to build things and own them. I want to be in charge. I don't want to have to play a Game and relearn the rules every time the person in charge decides to change them. So, friends, that's what I've learned, that's what I've been going through, that's what I've been thinking about, that's what I've been struggling with and that's that's what I've learned.

I hope that, no matter what dream you are dreaming right now, that you keep going forward too, even if it's just for the reason that you love it, that's absolutely reason enough. I also hope that, if you're building something, that you keep going and Just that you remember that that good things take time they do, and that the longer we do something, the better we get at it and the better the thing gets and the more it grows. Growth takes time. It really does. And then I think you know you don't have to be perfect at something to start, you just have to like it enough to Start and keep going. But you will get better and so will the thing, and that I think. A lot of times the people that succeed the most aren't the smartest or the best or the most qualified. They're just the people that Stuck it out, even when it felt really hard or discouraging. And I'm just hearing both of us on, as we both do that. You know it really is.

It's scary to pursue a dream. Putting yourself out there stinks, there's just no other way to say it. But I think that the alternative is even worse. I know, for me, I don't want to miss out on my life. I don't want to miss out on my dreams because I'm too scared to go for them. I Would rather as you know, I said this before, but I would rather do every single thing that I can and fall on my face, rather than avoid the risk and never know what might have been possible if I just tried. So here I am. That's my story. That's what I've been thinking about, what I've been going through and I'm going for this.

I love friendship, I love travel and I am a firm believer that girls trips and girls nights and girls weekends are the very, very best form of self-care. I also believe that we are never too old wear matching shirts. It's always fun and there's never an occasion too small or too silly to mark with fun pictures and matching sweatshirts. I'm also really tired of struggling with my Christmas gift Christmas list. I feel like great best friend gifts shouldn't be this hard to find.

But even though I know that I believe those things, even though I know that I love this and want to pursue this, I'm nervous. I'm so nervous, friends. I have been writing books and recording

podcast episodes and teaching courses and speaking on stages and I've had an online shop for years and years and years now, but I still am nervous to put myself out there and still nervous to do something new. But I'm doing it this year, actually this week, and bravely and a little shakily, because I hope that you do it too. I hope you do the brave thing. I hope you keep going, even though it feels safer to quit. I hope you keep putting yourself out there, that you try again and you do it, even though you might totally fail. But it really isn't failure if you're doing something that you care about. That's what I hope for me, that's what I hope for you too. So, friends, that's it. That's a story. My new little shop, the girls night gift shop, is going to be opening up officially at 8 am on black Friday, and I'm totally nervous, but maybe I'm a little less nervous because you guys know I'm nervous. I think that maybe that just helps. If you want to check it out, if you want to get a little sneak peek of what I have in there, you can go to girls night gift shop comm. So that's it. Here we go, love you, friends.

Friends, thank you so much for listening to today's episode. I cannot tell you how much it means to me to have you here at girls night Before you go. I would love it if you do two quick things. The first is to subscribe. Subscribing to the podcast is the best way to make sure you never miss an episode. It's also a way easier way to listen, because it's a way of sort of bookmarking the podcast. You never have to go looking for it again. Your apple just automatically download the next episode when a new one's released.

The other thing is that it would mean so much to me if you take just a quick second to leave a rating and review for the podcast. The way the iTunes knows to suggest the podcast to new people is by the ratings and the reviews. That's how we invite new friends to our girls nights. So would you do me a huge favor and take just a second to leave us a rating and a quick comment about how you like the podcast so far? It would help us out so much, and thank you to all of you who've left those beautiful five star reviews already. I can't tell you how much it means to me. All right, friends, that's all we have for today, but we'll be back next week with another episode of girls night and I have to tell you you are going to love this one. I'll see you then.