

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Becca Pike

Guys, today I have some special guests for you. Four very normal everyday women decided one day that they had had enough with their might I say pretty damn well-paying jobs. They wanted to build a business even though they knew nothing about entrepreneurship. They hired me to coach them, and these boss ladies built a seven figure brick and mortar company quicker than I've ever seen. And they weathered a pandemic shutdown only 60 days into the start of their company.

Today we talk to two of them, Corie May and Katie Robinson. We shoot the shit about what that was like, what they wished they had known, and the journey that they went on together learning how to grow this company. You guys are going to enjoy this one. So grab a coffee or put on your headphones for a walk, grab a beer, and come hang out with Corie, Katie, and myself.

Hey, guys. I'm Becca Pike and welcome to *The Hell Yes Entrepreneur* podcast, the number one show for entrepreneurs looking to create their first six-figure year. If you've got the drive and you know how to hustle but you're not sure where to channel your energy, we've got the answers. Let's dive into today's show.

Becca: Hey girls. How are we doing?

Corie: Doing good. Thank you for having us.

Katie: Great yeah, thanks.

Becca: Yeah, absolutely. I'm so glad you guys are here. You guys are some A+ business coaching clients of mine. And I am so pumped to have you on the podcast because you guys have a hell of a story to tell people, and I can't wait for them to hear it. So when you guys came to me, you all were all working really solid jobs. You guys were making good money in the corporate world working for someone else, correct?

Corie: Correct.

Katie: Best money I've ever made.

Becca: Yeah. You came to me, and you said, "We want to start a business. We know literally nothing, but we're all in and we want to get this going right now." Do you remember this? We were eating tacos.

Katie: On our lunch break.

Becca: You said, "We want to start an esthetics practice." At the time, I didn't know what esthetics was. I didn't even...Botox, filler, all of that stuff, it was so foreign to me. Which, by the way, is a fantastic testament. I have a lot of people that say, "How could I ever have a business coach unless they know everything about my industry?" Guys, your coach doesn't need to know everything about your industry. They need to be able to see your books and see your minds. From there, they will be able to coach you. I promise. If they are good business coaches.

I knew nothing about what you guys were doing. You were like, "It's going to be successful. We promise." Do you remember? You know why it was so successful? Because you guys are such a testament of the success that can happen when you go all in, when you rip the band aid off and have absolutely no plan B because that's what I noticed the most about you all. That you were just like, "We're going this. There's no turning around. We're going to make it work. Period."

Corie: Absolutely. They said if you want to take the island, burn the boats. We burned the boats. There was no other option.

Becca: You did. You really did. So this is Corie May and Katie Robinson. They own 4esthetics Lounge in Lexington, Kentucky. They also have two other co-owners, Krystle Baylon and Emilee Evans. This is a group of four ladies. We are missing Krystle and Emilee right now. They are holding down the fort at the shop. Correct?

Corie: Absolutely.

Becca: All right. Fantastic. Well, listen guys. It's been such an honor to watch you all grow. I want to just get into the nitty gritty of starting the business and your first couple years. Because there's a lot of people that are listening to this podcast, and they are just in the trenches of starting and growing a business. One of the main reasons I have this podcast is to A, normalize all of the things that we deal with as entrepreneurs. Also B, like to give advice and to just give thoughts and help along the way. A different way of thinking, a different perspective. I know that you guys can do that with me.

Corie: Yeah, let's do it.

Katie: Yeah, we'd love to.

Becca: All right. So tell us a little bit about why you left such a good paying job. What were the thoughts behind, "I'm going to go into this thing that I've never done before, and I'm just going to make it work." Can you tell me a little bit about what was going on with you all?

Corie: We're in a job that we weren't happy with. We aren't people who are very satisfied being unhappy. So we had a specific vision for what we wanted. We saw kind of a need in the aesthetic industry. We really wanted to help solve a problem of it being stereotyped. We really wanted to destigmatize esthetics in general and make it welcoming for everybody. We knew that we really couldn't do that working for someone else because you're kind of dealing with their vision as well. So we knew we had to leave and break out on our own to do that. So we had no plan B. We luckily had you and we had motivation and courage to do it. Kind of the rest is history from the start there.

Becca: Yeah. Just to give my audience a perspective. How fast and how successful was it? Can you guys give me an idea on number of clients or revenue or anything that would show them. You guys literally built from nothing quite a company.

Katie: Yeah. So we quit our jobs beginning of August Katie:0Corie:8. We did concierge services. We made enough money to support our company and open our brick and mortar by October is when we signed our least. So really just two months of working kind of remotely before we were able to open our brick and mortar and kind of go all in.

We didn't have to take out a business loan. Our industry has really pretty good profit margins. So we were able to support our brick and mortar renovation and stuff like that while we were working remotely doing concierge services. So I feel like that in and of itself kind of is a testament to how quick our business got off the ground. Also we had four owners, which wasn't just the two of us. We really needed all four of us to really make it go as fast as it did.

Becca: Yeah. I want to talk about that because you guys got a lot of pushback from everybody that was involved in your business I feel like. You had to deal with accountants and attorneys and all kinds of stuff while you were growing and starting the business. So many people told you it was a bad idea to have four owners. What were your thoughts on that? What helped you? Because you don't feel that way anymore, of course.

Corie: Absolutely not. We would not be here if we didn't have all four of us. I mean we really never let it scare us. We knew it was going to be the four of us regardless. So we weren't really second guessing. I won't lie. I mean getting paid sucks with four people, but other than that we would not be where we are. We move so much quicker. We can get so many things done. We have four different minds that have four different visions. We all have different roles in the company that is so beneficial that we would have moved at such a slower pace with just one or two people.

Becca: Yeah, for sure. I teach my clients about visionaries versus implementers. You guys just happened to have two visionaries and two implementers. That means that you had two people that weren't wanting to do the visionary work. The front and center, the sales aspect, the growing of the goals. Then you had the two implementers in the background who

are phenomenal with keeping the books and understanding the inventory and all of the more data based stuff. I think that was a beautiful alignment that just happened in your favor so well.

Katie: Yeah. I don't like to say that anything we did was because of luck except for that. That just happened to work out in our favor.

Becca: Because I can tell you right now. It wouldn't have worked out this way if you had four visionaries or four implementers. Or even if you had three. If it was even slightly more unbalanced, do you know how hard it would be for the one implementor if there were three visionaries? So I think that that's fantastic that you guys lined up that way.

Corie: Yeah. It's very hard for our implementers already, us two being the visionaries pushing against them all the time.

Katie: Yeah.

Becca: You guys sacrificed a lot to start this business. Can you tell us a little bit about that? Take us on a little journey about just what was going on in your life and financially and raising families. Like you guys really sacrificed for a long time.

Corie: Yeah. I mean even to this day it's fun to go back and look at where we came from because sometimes, I still feel like that. I'm like, "Oh my gosh. I'm not getting paid what I want to get paid." When I go back and think of it from the beginning, I'm like okay. I'm really doing okay. If I can make it through that, we're getting paid just fine. We grow on a really good trajectory. I mean in the beginning, we basically—I mean two of us have kids and families. I mean aside from that, we support a lot of other family members all four of us.

So in the beginning, going from like you said. Three of us are nurse practitioners and nurses. So really comfy jobs. We were getting paid a good amount of money. So we basically left all of that. We all kind of drained our saving's account. Thankfully to our other two owners, our

implementers really helped keep our budget tight in the beginning. If it wasn't for them really kind of reigning Katie and I in, we would have been in a much worse outcome right now because we probably would have spent all of our money.

But yeah. We put all of our own money in. We had to sign for personal guarantees on our lease. So when you sign that you're going to give your house away on a brick and mortar lease, it kind of lights a little bit of a fire to make sure that you're successful. So there's really no other option.

Becca: Man, that's so fun. I think that when people become successful, the number one thing that they get together, and they talk about is the beginning days. Isn't it so true? Like if you watch any successful YouTube video, people on YouTube videos are... If you're surrounded by people who have reached a new level of financial stability through business, what do we always talk about? We always talk about the hustle and how hard it was and how much we sacrificed because we learned so much in such a short amount of time.

I don't know. It's so bittersweet. I don't want to go back there. I don't want to struggle like that. Like I know that, for sure. I'm Corie:00% positive that I'm done with those days, but I look back on them with such fondness because it's such a good story.

Katie: Yeah. I mean we literally...When I say we worked remotely, we worked from Starbucks and Whole Foods and places with free Wi-Fi because we didn't have an office space. We didn't want to be in our houses because it doesn't really feel like you're going to work. That was prepandemic. Now it's very normal. We didn't want to be in our home. So we wanted to go and get work done. So we would just sit at Whole Foods and Starbucks for hours just on our computers doing whatever we had to get done.

Becca: I remember the conversation when you were like, "What's the proper etiquette on how long you can stay at Whole Foods? Are we

allowed to be here all day?" I remember being like I don't know if there's any rules exactly, but maybe you should buy some stuff while you're there.

Corie: Then you're also broke. So you're like, "I'm just going to pack my lunch and bring it to Whole Foods, so I don't have to spend money all day getting food." Yeah. We definitely pushed the envelope on that one.

Becca: Yeah. Absolutely. So there's a lot of people that are listening to this, and maybe even NPs that want to start their NP practice or their aesthetic practice. They're scared, right. Maybe even back when you were still working for someone else, or they've gotten up the courage to leave and they're getting ready to start a business. What would you say to them? Ui know that's a very basic question. It's kind of a broad question. Like what did you need to hear the most that you could give to somebody else right now?

Katie: I think the support in general. You have to have a support system in general. So your family's got to be on board. Then the people that you're going to work with have to be on board. I mean I think the biggest thing that we heard, I mean we just heard from multiple people like you can do this. You can do this. You got this. Honestly maybe we were naïve to think, but we were like, "All right, yeah. We can do it."

I mean you need a support system. My husband was there saying, "Yeah, let's do it." I know Corie's was too, and the other girls were too. I don't know. I think that support system was one of the biggest things. If you have that in place, you can totally do it.

Corie: Yeah. Honestly, and a business coach too. I feel like you were such a huge part of...I mean you literally were like, "Okay. So it's time to quit your job." I mean just basic things like that. Like someone not only to be there and support you and believe that you can do it, but to like give you direction of what steps you need to take first. Obviously step one was quitting our job. We would have been in that job way longer than we would

have had you not told us too. I mean someone to kind of push you out of your comfort zone a little bit to do kind of the next big thing.

Becca: Yeah. To be completely honest with you, I love being tied to your all's business. Not only because we're such good friends at this point, but like the growth has been, like I said, just such an honor to watch. It hasn't just been...Like I coached the shit out of you guys. I remember having times where we sat down and like we made plan after plan after plan. The only reason that it worked was because you guys would just take the plan, and you would execute it immediately. I tell that to people all the time.

You guys have actually, whether you know it or not, have sent a lot of clients to me. When we talk about you guys, they're always like, "Man, it sounds like you're such a killer business coach." I always tell them. I'm like listen. These girls, there was no backup plan in their mind. There was no twiddling their thumbs. When I suggested a single thing, the four of them would have it done in like an hour. It was ridiculous. It's such a testament to the success. I know I keep saying that, but you guys were so coachable. Everything that was brought up, you guys would just digest it and turn it around and implement it.

Corie: I feel like there was a few instances where we like pushed back and were like. Like we're just not ready to do that. Then like literally two months later, a month later we'd be like, "All right, I guess Becca was right. So we should probably have done that. So now we're two months behind."

Katie: We still do that.

Becca: I feel like that is half of the things that business coaches deal with. People are just like, "No, you're absolutely wrong. There's no way that that's true." It's really just like their brain trying to keep them safe. Then later being like, "Okay, I get it now. I should have done it a long time ago." I do the same thing by the way. I totally fight with my coach in my head. I'm like, "There's no way she's right about this. This is way too scary."

Corie: Yeah, yeah. I know. After doing that a few times, we realized that was not a good idea. Like okay fine. She said to do it. Let's just do it.

Becca: Yeah. Like let's go ahead and get it over with. That's so funny. By the way, did you know that a lot of people think that you can't be friends with your business coach? Like those are two lines that you can't blur. Let's just go into that for a second. Because I feel like, I hope you guys feel the same way, but I feel like we were just friends immediately. Like we would work really hard, and we would be really focused as business coach/client relationship, right. Then we also would go out for wine. You would come and have bonfires at my house. We would have dinners at my house. What do you guys say to that?

Katie: I honestly think it just made it so much more real. We knew that if we didn't do things that we were told to do or recommended to do then you were going to get us because you saw us regularly, not just during coaching sessions.

Becca: I'm going to get you.

Katie: Yeah. It made us trust you more. You truly had our best interests at heart. We weren't just another client you know.

Becca: Yeah. One of the things I feel like you guys did really well...So a lot of entrepreneurs, they start a business, and they feel like they need to know everything. They're like, "Well, I could never start a business because I don't know how to do the accounting. I don't know how to do the lawyer stuff. I don't know how to write up contracts."

I'm constantly trying to help people understand like all you need to do is know your craft. You guys, you're not attorneys. You're not accountants. You guys are APRNs. You guys are really good at esthetics. That's what you need to do, and you've got to leave the rest for the other people. What was it like for you guys to realize that, and to just be able to take a load off and give it to other experts in their field, right?

Corie: Yeah. I feel like in the beginning, it's really hard. Especially when you're not making a lot of money to want to hire out. You're like, "Okay, well I can just do this. I'll just do this, so I don't have to pay somebody to do it." There's a few things that no matter what it costs, you have to hire out. If you don't know how to do it, you need to find the people that do.

The biggest things are definitely accounting. Maybe not to run your everyday books. But as a small business, when you're doing your taxes, you want to make sure you're set up from the beginning. I don't know anything about accounting. If it wasn't for our other integrators and our accountant.

Then also like a lawyer, especially if you're in a business with more than one person like we are. Making sure you have an ownership agreement from the very beginning that kind of outlines what you would do if you were to get in trouble or there were to be a disagreement. You kind of have to talk about the staff that really nobody wants to talk about in that ownership agreement. So you have something to go back and discuss what you all had discussed when you first started. Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. To me, ownership agreements, they give you freedom. A lot of people think, "Oh my gosh. I don't want to be tied down to contracts and stuff." It's like no. You've got to go. Have the hard conversations. What do we do if this happens? What do we do if that happens? Once it's all on pen and paper and it's squeaky clean and everyone knows exactly what's going down, I think that that allows you freedom in the sense of you don't have to...What am I trying to say? You don't have to worry yourself of what would happen.

Corie: Yeah. Like just for example. Like little things where there's four of us. Like if we were to get into a stalemate and we really could not come to a decision, we have in our ownership agreement we have to have coaching from an outside source. Then we have to come to an agreement. There's some decisions that can be made by a majority of three to one or there are some decisions that have to be unanimous. Like opening a second

location. That has to be a unanimous decision because that takes a lot of our money. So stuff like that.

Just knowing what decisions can be made off the cuff. Like, "Oh hey, we're going to order this product." Like yeah, sure. We need that. So anybody can make that decision. The bigger decisions like opening a second location, where we want to allocate lots of money, hiring people. That all has to be unanimous because it's going to affect the whole team, the whole business.

Having a lawyer kind of even just ask the questions. We didn't even know what questions to ask. So our lawyer was like, "What happens if one of you dies?" We were like what? None of us are going to die. You don't think about those things. So having a lawyer be like, "No, you need to have an exit plan. Does the quarter of the business go to the person's spouse? Can he sell it to anybody, and you guys have like a...?" You know what I mean? We didn't even know to ask those questions, but the lawyer does.

So making sure you have the right person. Our first lawyer said it didn't work for The Beatles, it's not going to work for you when we told him that there was four of us. So making sure you have a right lawyer that understands your vision for a business, and then to ask the questions that you don't even know to ask is very important.

Becca: How do you know that you have the right attorney?

Corie: We're working with one guy. Not the Beatles guy who said we couldn't do it.

Katie: Was that the guy that I recommended to you?

Corie: The first one, yeah. You're like, "Okay, taking him off my list."

Becca: Yeah, that's crazy.

Corie: Our second lawyer, he's the one that helped our ownership agreement and stuff like that. Then after we had more needs for our

consent and stuff, he just like really wasn't as involved as we needed him to be in the beginning. So we tried a different lawyer. So our lawyer now has been doing great. He looks at all of our consents to make sure everything is in there. Review our lease if we ever want to sign a new lease. Stuff like that.

Becca: Did he write all this up for you? Or did you already have these contracts and he looked over them? What can my audience expect? Let me ask this. Let's say my audience has no contract. They have no ownership agreement. What are the first couple steps that they can do that would benefit them?

Katie: We had no idea what went into an owner's agreement at all. They kind of gave us the outline and let us fill in the blanks. As far as our consents and stuff like that go, especially on the medical side, they can draft from scratch for you. Or you can give them kind of a premade up one, and then they can adjust it for your company specifically.

Becca: All right. So let's switch gears just a little bit. So one of the things I want to talk about is the image that people see of what they consider to be successful businesses and business owners. Compared to like what's going on behind the scenes, right. People come to me often and they think, "Wow, like you've made it." I don't know what they think. Something along the lines of how nice is it up there in the successful world? Like as if we don't need coaching still. As if we don't have to put out fires all the time.

Can you tell us a little bit about what goes on behind the image? Because you guys have built such a beautiful image. Like your image and your branding. You guys look perfect.

Corie: That's good to hear because it doesn't feel like that at all sometimes.

Katie: We hire people to do that.

Corie: It started with Krystle. Krystle's one of our other owners. She's the integrator. She definitely...Okay. Let me go back. So when we first started, and this was a recommendation from you. We sat down, especially where there's four of us, and we were like. Okay, what are everyone's strengths and what are everyone's weaknesses?

Katie's strength is definitely like education. She's just like a workhorse. She kind of gets everything done. If you need something done, she's really dependable. Krystle's is like social media, marketing. The backend, making it look pretty. That kind of thing. Mine is not that. Mine is sales. I'm more the people person. The talker, the whatever.

So I think like once we knew our strengths, especially Krystle, that was her role that she was able to take over. It doesn't have to be perfect in the beginning. It definitely takes a lot of work on the inside, but I think playing to her strength really benefited us from the beginning.

Becca: Yeah. Absolutely. Even though you guys have made it, do you guys still have problems? Do you still have issues? Do you still need coaching? What's it look like?

Corie: Have we made it?

Katie: Oh my gosh. It's a constant...I mean yes. We're happy where we have come from and where we're at right now, but it's still a constant hustle. We will never go without coaching. Because maybe we hit one goal, and then we set a higher goal. We still always need someone there to help push us, help us when we're in a rut. We're feeling that right now. Like right now we're feeling a season of just being in a rut. We've definitely been in seasons where we've been celebrating. It's a rollercoaster. Owning a business is a rollercoaster. You need help. You can't always just do it yourself. I don't foresee us ever going without some form of coaching.

Becca: Yeah. I love that. What are you guys celebrating right now? What's going good in your business?

Corie: Well we increased our marketing because we're in a lull.

Katie: Yeah. We're in a lull. I would say what's going great in our business

is we have built a fantastic team and culture.

Becca: Yeah.

Corie: Yes.

Becca: Yeah, I love that.

Corie: We worked really hard on that. We worked really, really hard to

build the team that we have. They are awesome.

Becca: What do you think—Because you guys do have a great culture. You guys have added a lot of teammates since you started, of course. Everyone really gets along. When you walk into 4estethetics, the energy in there is phenomenal. Do you guys do team building? I remember at one point there was a meeting that required your staff members to dance or something. What am I remembering right now?

Katie: Yeah, those are our weekly team meetings. We do those every Monday at 2 if you want to come dance with us. We try and always do team building at least once a month or once every couple months. I know this month we have a team treatment day coming up where we're all going to do a little brunch and then treat each other to some skincare treatments. We definitely try to socialize with each other outside of just business and work.

Corie: Yeah. From the beginning, we would do like monthly dinners. We would go and we would pay for everything and take everyone out to dinner. It wasn't always something that we probably could have afforded. If you're really staying strict on the budget, we probably shouldn't. We just felt like the culture of yes, we're your bosses, but you're in our family. We wanted to make sure they felt they were taken care of.

Becca: Yeah, absolutely.

Katie: It was really important to us to know about like their families and their personal lives. A lot of times when you're at work and you're seeing patient after patient, you don't have time to know that about people. So I try to frequently stay on top of that, so we know what's going on in everyone's lives.

Becca: Yeah. I think I noticed with entrepreneurs, a lot of times that gets brushed under the rug. When you're in the hustle and bustle of growing a business and you start cutting corners, what you're cutting is things like team building. To me, it's such a foundational piece of having a strong company. What are some of the benefits that you guys see just by having a team that feels like family? That has put in the work to get to know each other. What are you seeing that's benefited from that?

Corie: That was one of the good things about having even just the four of us. Now it's even multiplied now that there's eight of us total. Somebody is always going to have a bad day. So the other people are there to be like, "Come on." Keep you going. "Let me make you some coffee." Whatever it is. I feel like we've created that culture in our office where it's like they will lift each other up if you're having a bad day, whatever it is. Someone's always willing to reach out and be like, "Oh, you're not feeling good? Go home. Feel better. I got your shift." It's not like ugh.

Becca: It takes so much pressure off, right, because you are taken care of. I think that it allows people to be so much more creative. Like have you guys ever worked somewhere where you don't even bring up good ideas. You don't even say them. They wouldn't be listened to. If they were, it would just be like in passing, right. So when you have this type of culture, your staff is more creative. They are bringing more ideas forward. They feel more comfortable to be themselves, which is going to increase their productivity, their creativity, all of the things.

So like to me it's not the first thing to brush under the rug, right. The staff feeling like a family and feeling taken care of is such an integral part of

growing your business, and also seeing it reflected in your revenue and in your sales as well.

Corie: Yeah. They bring us ideas all the time. Initially they were really hesitant. They were like, "You want me to do what? Isn't this your company?" Because they had never been told that in any of their other jobs before. We were very transparent. Like no, we really want you to. We want your ideas. Just little things like, "Hey, we could really use a shelf in this room." So literally within a week we went, got a shelf, put it up. They were like, "Oh my god. You listened to me." Like actually when you go out and do what they were asking, it really just makes them feel involved and feel heard. Yeah.

Becca: I love that. So good. All right. So just to recap and give the audience a real understanding of this business and the growth that it has had. In 2018, you guys were working for someone else. You felt you knew nothing about business. In 2020, you made it through a pandemic, and your brick and mortar had only been opened for how long?

Corie: Two months.

Becca: Yeah. It had been open for about 60 days when it got shut down. Now it is 2021. What are you seeing for your business in 2023? So that is exactly five years from opening. 2023. What's it doing?

Corie: Well first and foremost, we want to have a bigger location. I feel like by 2023, maybe a second location. So two large locations I think is definitely in our future. Whether it be another one here in Lexington or in a surrounding city. I think we're all for expanding and opening more locations.

Becca: Yeah, love it. How about you Katie?

Katie: Yeah. I mean even just our financial goal for this year alone. Hopefully—Not hopefully. We're going to hit 1.1 million. So five years from now, the world's our oyster. We have so much growing to do. Growing our

team. Really keeping that culture as we grow. We're really excited. I mean there's so much to do.

Becca: I love it. What's your plan if we get shut down again this fall? How much wine are you going to drink at my house?

Corie: A lot.

Katie: Every day.

Corie: We will be there.

Katie: We'll work from your house.

Becca: So I'll be waiting for you guys at 9:00 a.m. with my chilled wine for us to drink away our sorrows.

Katie: Let's pray that doesn't happen.

Corie: Oh gosh, yeah.

Becca: No, it's not going to happen. I'm manifesting nothing but goodness for small business owners everywhere.

Corie: Yeah.

Becca: So can you tell my audience where they can find you so that they can check you guys out?

Corie: So probably the best place to find us is on our Instagram. We're just 4esthetics Lounge. Then we also have a website. If esthetics is something that any of your listeners want to get into, we actually have a second company called Esthetic Masterplan where we talk about really how we started our business from the ground up, and also do injection techniques with models and stuff like that too. So definitely our website is the best place to find us. Just www.4estheticslounge.com.

Becca: Awesome. Thank you, ladies, for being here today. I look forward to seeing you guys probably, I don't know, tomorrow.

Katie: Hopefully.

Corie: So wine at your house tonight?

Becca: Yes please. All right guys. Thank you so much. See you soon.

Hey, thanks for taking the time to listen to today's episode. If you're looking to get more clarity and momentum for your business, visit hellyescoachingonline.com. See you next week here on *The Hell Yes Entrepreneur* podcast.