

Ep #123: Leading Well: Personality vs Skill with Ashlee Brown



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Becca Pike

[The Hell Yes Entrepreneur](#) with Becca Pike

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Hello my friends. Today we are interviewing one of my private students who has absolutely excelled in her business. Ashlee Brown is a lactation consultant here in Kentucky. She started her business less than two years ago.

To be quite frank, she battled with a lot of imposter syndrome and not believing she could actually own a successful business, and still to this day is navigating how to be the best boss and leader that she can be. In this vulnerable and open and honest interview, Ashlee talks about what it takes for her to overcome her fear in order to grow the Kentucky Breastfeeding Center to what it is today.

But before we get started, I have an announcement. Sprint Week is back. You don't want to miss this seven day challenge that has made a lot, a lot of money and change and evolution in my students businesses. So for context, here's why I invented Sprint Week here in Hell Yes Coaching.

I've coached thousands of people, and I have noticed that most business owners spend way too much time perfecting the way that their business looks and doing like back end work. So things like building their website, choosing brand colors, deciding on their staff photos, thinking about business cards, if people actually still use business cards, and simply just doing a lot of planning for things that honestly don't really matter in the very beginning. What matters in the beginning is getting customers in the door. If you don't have customers, you don't have a business.

Sprint Week was created to put a pause on all of that backend stuff and to spend one week in a community with other sprinters focusing and pushing ourselves to the max on the front end business, or what I like to call getting all the clients. So this is a one week all out sprint challenge to throw gasoline on your business's client demand.

There's going to be a point system. We're going to show you exactly what to do. You are going to be able to track all the things that you have done

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and gain points for them. This is a community. There's going to be other sprinters in there. It's going to involve two live business workshops.

This is a week of preparation to start your Q4 out with more demand than you've had the whole year. Guys, we have ran Sprint Weeks five times now inside of Hell Yes Coaching. It is one of HYCs most potent and successful challenges. We have seen multiple students who participate in Sprint Week acquire upwards of 25, 30, 35 new clients. You guys do not want to miss out on this. Okay.

As John and I always say, Sprint Week is the most wonderful time of the year. If you're a part of my annual membership, Sprint Week is included in your membership. So you don't have to do anything. If you're not a part of The Circle, this challenge is only \$222. So this is priced to be one of my most accessible offers because this is the offer that creates so much revenue for my students so quickly, and we want you to be able to access this and 20x your investment.

So if you're a part of The Circle, this is part of your membership. If not, you can sign up for it on my Instagram account. It is in my Linktree. It says Sprint Week. We begin on September 25. Okay, on September 25. If for any reason you don't have Instagram, you can email us at contact@hellyescoachingonline.com. All right, guys, on to episode number 123 with my beautiful and hilarious and successful client, Ashlee Brown, at the Kentucky Breastfeeding Center.

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: Hello Ashlee.

Ashlee: Hi, how are you?

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Becca: I'm good. I'm so excited that you're here. I actually don't know the answer to this. Do you listen to this podcast?

Ashlee: You don't know the answer to this? I'm the one that told you that I listened to what was it, 75 episodes in a weekend?

Becca: That's right. I remember now. Okay, so there's a reason you're nervous because you've been listening to this podcast for a long time.

Ashlee: I know exactly how it's going to go. Yes.

Becca: Oh my gosh, that's amazing. Okay, so can you just take a second and tell our listeners who you are and what you do.

Ashlee: I'm Ashlee Brown. I am a lactation consultant. Some people don't know the acronym, but it's IBCLC which is Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant. So I run a business in central Kentucky. It used to be known as my name, which is Ashlee Brown IBCLC, but we rebranded this month actually to Kentucky Breastfeeding Center. We see probably 25 to 30 visits or patients a week, which is quite a few. I have a team of five providers, including me, and two staff. So we're very busy.

Becca: I love that. So you're a boobie ninja, a nipple warrior, a motherhood.

Ashlee: What did we decide it was? I can't remember. But it was like a term you used.

Becca: A nipple ninja, helping women breastfeed everywhere. Which, by the way, I've told you this a thousand times. I wish I had a lactation consultant. They gave me one in the hospital I remember, but she like really, I mean, she was in there for like 30 seconds.

Breastfeeding was really hard for me with Solo. I did it for a year with her. I also did it for a year with Cedar. But with Cedar, I had so much milk. It was insane. With Solo, I had like no milk, no milk. I had the hardest time. I had painful breastfeeding. I remember just being in tears for like the first year

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and then having the biggest sense of relief whenever it was “done”. So what you do, I just believe in so much and like have an actual honest place in my heart for how much you're needed.

Ashlee: Well, thanks. I really love my job.

Becca: So let's backtrack it a little bit. So you haven't always been a successful business owner. Right? When I met you, you had already started your business. It wasn't as successful as it is now. But let's go back even further. What made you have the courage to start a business to begin with?

Ashlee: Well, I never, first of all, wanted to be in private practice. That was not my. I just knew that I couldn't be a business owner. Like I was convinced. Even though I came from a family of business owners. My grandmother, my mother, like everybody ran a business, my uncle. So I'd seen it happen, but I just didn't think it was for me. Maybe it was because I saw it happen.

I just had been working for other people for so long. I didn't feel like I was getting what I needed out of that. So my husband and my mom were both like just do it. It's not as big of a deal as you're making it. I think you're going to do well. So then January of last year, January of '22, that's when I pulled the trigger. I was like okay, let's do this.

Becca: Could you like pinpoint the fear that kept you?

Ashlee: Oh yeah.

Becca: What was like the one thing that was like keeping you from starting it?

Ashlee: Well, fear of failure like everyone else. I just didn't think that I had it in me to be successful,, I guess. I had just, like I feel like my entire life I've never had that like niche. There was never, I did a few things here and

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there, but I never was, I'm not actually truly good at anything. So why would I be successful in running a business?

So then I got talked into it because everybody else believed in me. I didn't believe in myself. Then two months into it, it just kind of took off.

Becca: So only two months in?

Ashlee: Yeah, because it was a niche that was not met. There was one person in the area who was doing it.

Becca: Interesting. You saw that. You fulfilled it. Did you start your business because there was such a market for it? Or was it just like this just happened to be something you were passionate about, and it happened to be that there was not much competition?

Ashlee: No, I didn't start it because there was no competition. I started it because that was what I trained for. I had always seen myself working in the hospital. But then I liked the idea of instead of just the first few days, following these parents throughout their first year of parenthood. So the idea of the follow through for me was a big one. Like it was the thing that I wanted to do. I had finally found something that I was good at.

Becca: Okay, so at what point in your business did you find me? Let's talk a little bit about the changes that I've seen in you just in the last year. How far into your business were you whenever we had our first consultation?

Ashlee: I feel like it was around this time last year because I was listening to your podcast. It was yes, it was around this time last year because I was, my husband and I flew to DC for a day to go to a concert. That was how I had so much free time to listen to 75 episodes. So then I was like okay, let me follow this girl on Instagram. I liked the course that was on your Instagram.

I had wanted to join Three More was your other program at the time. You had put out like an offer, like whoever joins Three More within a certain

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amount of days gets a one on one with me. I was like well, that's it. That's what I want to do. So that sealed the deal for me. That's when we met, and I convinced you to meet me in person even though some rando like weirdo from the internet who was like I just listened to all your podcasts.

Becca: Oh my gosh, I know, but we met at Whole Foods, which was like my stomping ground. You know how I feel about the summit. So I was like well, I'm already here. No, I was happy to meet you. I feel like we had mutual friends in common too, right?

Ashlee: Yeah. Probably.

Becca: Tyler Dorsey, maybe. Is that right?

Ashlee: Yes.

Becca: Yeah. Okay, cool. You came recommended. I remember. So that was how many months had you been working in your own business at that point?

Ashlee: Nine.

Becca: Okay. How many staff members did you have at that point?

Ashlee: I think I may have had two. Maybe. Maybe one, maybe two.

Becca: Yes. I don't remember a ton about the consult. I remember sitting with you. I remember us chatting and getting along really well. Most of the time, I have consults with people that have a lot of potential in their business. I felt that from you. I felt like you had a lot of potential. But with other people, it was usually like this overwhelm. This I am so overwhelmed. I can't imagine how hard I would have to work to get there. I didn't get that from you.

What I got from you was more is it even possible vibe. I remember telling you yes, it is possible. You could have the lactation consulting business of Lexington, like of Kentucky. You could have the 20 staff members. You

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guys could see 60 people a week. I remember you being just really inspired and in awe of the idea that this could really take off. Do you remember that?

Ashlee: Yeah. I think it was always so interesting that I was following kind of your same trajectory with Massage Strong. Because you were like oh, my gosh. You don't even understand. This could be so big. I was like no, I don't think so. Not me, you know?

Becca: Yeah. So you joined Three More and then 30 More, and now you're a one on one client. Is that right? Did you do one round of 30 More?

Ashlee: So I did one round of 30 More. That was the other thing. At Whole Foods, you were like why are you not in 30 More? I was like well, I haven't hit 50k yet. You were like but you'll hit 50k by the end of this month. I was okay yes, yes. Then I waited until like the very last minute and then applied for 30 More.

Becca: Oh my god. I love that.

Ashlee: Yes. I did one round, and now doing one on one with you.

Becca: Yes. One on one is so much fun.

Ashlee: Yes. Love it.

Becca: So tell us a little bit. Here's something that I noticed in you, and I want all of my listeners to hear. There are different ends of the spectrum of business owners and the amount of work that they expect it to take to grow their business. Okay.

So on one end, you got people that are like I am willing to work night and day for 20 years to get this thing off the ground, right. Then on the other end of the spectrum, you've got people that are like I started my business, and I handed out two business cards and it hasn't taken off. I don't know

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why. They just really underestimated the amount of work that it requires to speak to people and to get yourself out there.

Although you had a quick, some might say it was in your favor or of a benefit that this niche wasn't saturated in Lexington. But I also got to see a lot of behind the scenes of how hard you worked and how much effort you put into your content and into your writing and into your email, into your marketing.

Can you tell us a little bit about just the amount of effort that you have had to put in to see the results that you have had right now? Because your business isn't that old? Like we're talking you've only been open for like a year and nine months. Is that right?

Ashlee: Yeah.

Becca: You have had a lot of success just in the last year. So can you take us through what your marketing mindset is, as far as how often you are talking about your business, what you're doing, how you're communicating with your audience.

Ashlee: I didn't realize how much work it would be. I thought that I could just like open a business and that, I mean it did. The business just came to me at first. But then when I realized I wanted to start to grow and expand, I realized that managing people and all of the backend stuff while also seeing clients was very difficult.

So I made an effort after doing Austin 30 More, after all of that after I got home, I decided I was going to do one admin day so I could take off and focus on content, focus on the backend stuff, focus on all of the things that you just don't see when you go to a business. So now I have two admin days a week because there's a lot that I focus a lot.

I just recently started building my email list, but over the past, gosh, five months, four or five months, I've grown my social media following. But I think it's because of all of the, I consistently post three to six times a week.

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It's always educational, informational, and entertaining content. I have hired a marketing firm in the past because I feel like marketing is where I want to spend a lot of my money because it brings people in who otherwise would not have known that we exist.

But it takes a hell of a lot of work to be a business owner and to just work on the back end stuff like marketing and like posting on social media. You really have to, like my word of the year was delegate because I have my admin who does all of the patient communications, but I also needed somebody who could post on social media.

So I taught her about the way that I post on social media. She does those things for me so that I don't have to worry about that. I hired the marketing firm because I don't know anything about SEO. There are just so many things that it's okay if you don't know how to do those things. You can put your foot in and try to test out the waters. But if you're not perfect at it, that's okay. That's why other people have their businesses for those things is to be able to help other business owners.

Becca: Yeah. I feel like I watched your mind like crack open, like light bulbs going off like crazy whenever we were at the live event inside of 30 More back in Austin because it felt like you left with a plan for marketing. Like all of a sudden you understood the assignment. You started.

Ashlee: You also were very much like this is your job now. Like your job is to post content. I was like okay, got it.

Becca: Yeah. Yeah. You understood it. So then you learned the difference between educational pieces versus like personality pieces, what exactly you're drawing in. You started going heavy on education. You started teaching people about breastfeeding and all of the things that you see in your office, and you started teaching it for free on Instagram. It created a significant jump in your followers as well as your clients that came from that. So that was really cool to see.

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Ashlee: Yeah, it was definitely probably one of the most beneficial things that I got out of 30 More in general, other than lifelong friendships. But it was just really nice to have somebody teach me what I needed to do because, again, I know lactation. I don't know marketing. I don't know social media. So having a guide for that was just, I mean, it paid for itself.

Becca: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I love that. So what do you think up until this point, what has been the most challenging aspect for you in staffing your business properly?

Ashlee: Managing people. I mean I'm a people pleaser. We've talked about this, and I've needed just so much coaching on this. I want everybody to be happy. I want everybody to be my friend. I think, to an extent, that's important to create a good company culture, but also you have to realize that just like in breastfeeding, those parents are looking to you for answers. Your employees and your contractors are looking to you to guide them and to be their mentor and to point them in the right direction and tell them what to do.

Like my kids, if they do not have structure, they're going to lose it. They're going to lose their minds. You have to be able to do that. You have to be able to guide these people in the right direction. I think I'm learning that, but it's still really hard for me.

Becca: Yeah. Isn't it funny how as a business owner, your role evolves. So much like I think about the first, I don't know, couple hundred thousand dollars that you bring in in a year is so heavy on marketing. It's so heavy on content creation and getting audiences to follow. Because if you don't have customers, you don't have a business, right. So just getting people in the door is like the number one first thing to do.

But then as you start gaining steam, and you don't have to stay as focused on it because you have this revolving door of clients coming in. You've got referrals coming in. You've got just people having, just retention coming

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back. All of a sudden the snowball effect happens, and you begin having clients coming in the door. You don't have to focus on that as much.

But then it evolves and it changes to now it's like the next step is staff members and making sure you're properly staffed and making sure that your staff members are trained properly and making sure that you are leading them properly and that you are being clear and concise in what you need, what the business needs.

When you're at step one, you're starting to make 200 so thousand dollars a year, and you're like oh my business is going well. It's like bam, you have to change hats. You have to go into this totally other role of manager. So it has been an honor and also a reminder like watching you go through everything that you have gone through to try to just lead and lead well. It's just been interesting to see and to watch you go through it.

Ashlee: I never thought that I would have the personality to be a leader. I don't think I'm a natural born leader. I don't think that should dissuade people from starting their business just because they have the type of personality I have. I'm very timid. I was probably the shyest person in Austin, but it doesn't mean that you can't grow your business just because you have this personality.

Becca: Yeah, for sure. What kind of personality did you, like before Austin, would you have considered to be the type of personality to run a business?

Ashlee: You.

Becca: Oh. What kind of personality is that?

Ashlee: Strong willed and like decisive and know what you want and extroverted and someone who can communicate effectively. I just feel like I was not any of those things.

Becca: So have you changed your mind?

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Ashlee: Yeah.

Becca: Nice.

Ashlee: Yeah.

Becca: You feel like now you can run a business even with the personality that you have.

Ashlee: Yeah. I don't feel like I need to change myself. I do feel like there have been some things that I've had to improve on. Like I do have to be more decisive. Because if I'm not decisive then things will not get done. Or they'll get done, but we'll waste time and money on it. So that's been a big one for me, but I'm still me. I'm just a better version of me.

Becca: Yeah, I think, to me, it has nothing to do with personality and everything to do with skill. So I think some people are more naturally born with the ability to make decisions and make decisions quickly. Whether they're born with it or whether it was from their childhood or their teenage years, but for some reason, some people can make decisions better than others.

If you're someone who isn't very good at making decisions quickly, it's just because it hasn't been practiced. It hasn't been a skill that we focused on, right. So if you think about the wheel that makes up a "good" business owner, someone that is willing to take risks, someone that is willing to make decisions, someone that is willing to invest their money, someone that is willing to be vulnerable enough to say hey, I don't understand how this works. Can someone teach me? Or I don't know how to market. Can someone teach me?

All of these skill sets that make up the wheel, in my mind, are just skill sets. They're just practices. They're just things that you have to start doing and get better at. Then all of a sudden people look up to you. They're like oh, you're really good at that. It must just come naturally to you. You're like you have no idea how much I've worked at this.

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Ashlee: Yeah, it's wild how many people just tell me that they admire what I do, and they wish they could do what I do. I just think it's so funny because I just still don't see myself as the person that people go to for that kind of stuff. Because it's taken a while to get here.

Becca: Yeah, well, it requires an identity shift too. It's like, I don't know, if you were 400 pounds, but then you spent years and years like losing weight, getting healthy, getting fit, like counting your macros, working out at the gym. At the end of the day, you are chiseled, and you're in a figure competition.

A lot of people are going to be I can't believe how good you look. But in your mind, it's like you can go back and you can remember every grueling day. You can remember everything that you did. If your identity doesn't shift with your body, then you're still going to think of yourself as an overweight person that just happens to be skinny right now instead of someone that is, like not skinny, but like lean instead of just like I am a healthy person.

I see it in businesses too. It's like a lot of people started off shy and meek and without skill set and terrified. Now they've blossomed into these boss ass CEOs making big decisions, but they still see themselves as like meek. It's one of those just software updates that you have to continually do when you evolve this much in any area of life.

Ashlee: Definitely agree with that.

Becca: Yeah. So what are your goals with this business? Where do you see it going?

Ashlee: Well, I imagine it will just keep growing. I currently have an internship program where I train IBCLCs because traditionally in our field, we don't get a lot of good training. Set out to kind of change that. So I've got a few interns lined up over the next couple of years. Those people will be employed by me.

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We're going to continue to see more and more families and hopefully serve more than just central Kentucky, get to the eastern most parts where there is kind of a maternity desert, and people do not get the breastfeeding support that they need. I hope to have a couple of different branches of Kentucky Breastfeeding Center. Eventually I want to have consultants run the show while I go and educate professionals on breastfeeding because that's always been my ultimate career goal was to educate other professionals on lactation.

Becca: Oh, man, I love that. What a great picture. So you're saying that like if someone's listening to this, and they're in Nevada right now, they can work with you through telehealth?

Ashlee: Yes, we do a lot of telehealth.

Becca: Who do you work with the most? So obviously lactating women, but you also work with pregnant women, right?

Ashlee: One of my favorite things to do is prenatal consults, which is where we talk to people who are pregnant and planning to breastfeed. We discuss a feeding plan. Like if they have had any breastfeeding experience before, we talk about their health history, we'll talk about their birth plan, anything that could potentially interfere with that breastfeeding relationship. It's way more in detail than just your regular generic breastfeeding class because it's very personalized.

So we do a lot of that virtually just to make sure more people are prepared and more people have the success, whatever definition of success that is, for feeding. Making sure that they have that in their toolbox, and that they're prepared when they go into birth.

Becca: Yeah, love it. Okay, I'm going to ask you two final questions and then I'm going to give you the floor to tell us how everyone can get a hold of you. Okay, so number one, I'm going to give you both of them at the same time. Number one and two.

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What is your top piece of advice for a new mom that is having trouble breastfeeding? It's an umbrella question, right? You don't know why she's having trouble. You're just going to be a little birdie on her ear giving her motivation. Number two, what would be your top advice for a business owner that is trying to build a brick and mortar company. They might be in the beginning stages of it.

Ashlee: So for somebody who's breastfeeding and really going through it, I would always tell people the first two weeks are definitely the hardest. So if they're in it and they're in the first two weeks, just recognize that this is going to be really hard. Like nobody has an easy time the first two weeks postpartum, regardless of whether they're bottle or breastfeeding.

But if you're past that two weeks and you feel like things are still not right, make sure you seek help. Preferably if it's with breastfeeding with an IBCLC. If it's any sort of postpartum issues where you're just feeling, you're not feeling like yourself, make sure you're reaching out to your OB or midwife for care.

As far as business owners, especially for parents who are business owners, I think it was really eye opening when we met, you and I Becca, when I was like well, I could just take my baby to work. That sounds really great. Honestly, it's a great option. But you just cannot focus the way that you need to when your baby is at work with you if you do like kind of the clinical stuff that we do.

So just making sure that you have appropriate childcare because that is a form of delegation. So like I said, my word of the year is delegate. You have to delegate. Whether that's childcare, whether that's marketing, whether that's business coaching. You have to be able to look to someone else to say I cannot do this alone. I need help.

Becca: Yeah. Yep, absolutely. I am the queen of delegating. I have is zero guilt asking for help. Whenever people come to me, and they're like I have a really hard time asking for help. Or I was literally meeting my new

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therapist for the first time and she was like you seem like a high achiever. You must have trouble asking for help. I was like bitch, you don't know me at all. I want everyone to do everything for me. I want help in every aspect imaginable.

I think that that is truly actually my superpower. Is that I, for whatever reason, like when something comes onto my plate, I ask myself who else can do this? I've been doing that shit since high school.

So I agree with you completely. Delegation is key. Delegation is a superpower. Delegating is literally how our species have survived forever. Like we have always been village people with a lot of help, a lot of other mothers, a lot of kids, a lot of people at hand working together. Just in the last several 100 years, we've become a society of let me do everything myself. Mental health is showing how that's working.

Ashlee: Yeah, exactly. I think that those two things that you asked me go hand in hand just because of the whole village aspect. We don't live close to our families. We don't have the help. We go back to work six weeks. We just don't have. I saw a post somewhere, I think on Instagram, that she said we don't have the community that we used to, that our parents used to, that our grandparents used to. It's okay if you have to pay for that help.

Obviously, that comes from a place of privilege. Like there are a few people who absolutely that is just the last option. But if you are able to, delegating and asking for help and creating your own community, whether that's paid or whatever, is a complete necessity from a business owner perspective, from a mental health perspective, from a parenting perspective.

Becca: Yeah, absolutely. I completely agree. Couldn't agree more. Okay, how can my audience find you if they want to work with you?

Ashlee: You can find me on Instagram @AshleeIBCLC, which is Ashlee with two E's. You can also find me on Facebook, Ashlee Brown IBCLC.

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Then our new handle for Kentucky Breastfeeding Center is @KentuckyBreastfeedingCenter on Instagram.

Becca: Love it. Perfect. Thank you so much for being here Ashlee. I love you. I love working with you. I love the friendship that we've created, and I love watching your business blow the fuck up.

Ashlee: I love you too.

Hey guys, this podcast is the blood sweat and tears of a lot of different people. The planning and the preparation of each episode is extensive. My team and I are really proud to bring you this free and abundant content each week, and we hope that you're loving it. If you are, the very best thank you that we can receive from you is a review and a share.

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