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PART I: Setting the Stage for Success

Chapter 1: From Desire to Destiny

“Desires are like stepping stones on the path to your destiny.”
—Janet Attwood

I was lying on my back one summer evening in Santa Cruz, staring up at clouds passing overhead. It sounds like an idyllic moment of relaxation, right? Well, not exactly. My neck was out, and I was in terrible pain. I was exhausted, stressed, and broke, and I couldn’t move my head.

Full of visions, aspirations, and a bit of naiveté, I had just sold everything I owned, moved into an RV with my husband, and driven across the country to Santa Cruz. I was set to start my dream business and leave my legacy! Instead, I found myself broke and burned out. Struggling to launch my business and finally give the gifts I knew were inside me, I felt like a total failure. A friend had told me, “Sage – follow your desire!” But at that moment, “desire” was about as far from my consciousness as Iceland or Timbuktu.

Why had my neck twisted into knots? I was in the midst of my first major business project, an interview series I was putting together for women entrepreneurs—and to say it wasn’t going as well as I had hoped is an understatement. I had invested thousands of dollars in the project with very little profit to show for my weeks of effort. My husband was furious, and I was deeply ashamed that I wasn’t contributing to our financial resources or helping to pay off the nearly $35,000 of debt we had accumulated in moving to Santa Cruz.
Meanwhile, I was awakening to the crushing truth that our marriage was over. We had grown apart, and despite several years of attempting reconciliation, we had become two very different people. While I didn’t want to admit it to myself, I was ready to move on, and I needed the finances to do it.

At the same time, I was terrified to make the kind of money that would buy my freedom. I had resisted success for months, keeping the big dreams at bay as an excuse not to leave my husband and best friend of ten years. Even as I longed for the financial success that would give me the freedom to start a separate life, a part of me wanted any excuse to avoid the terror of going it alone. After all, my husband had believed in me when nobody else did, and even though we wanted different things in life, we still loved each other fiercely.

There was no denying what I felt deep inside, though: I was meant to support women to step into their greatness through building a business they loved. And how could I look my clients in the eyes and tell them to live their dreams when I wasn’t living mine in my marriage? It was time for me to step into the power I knew was within me and create my own income. Only then could I move beyond the safe container of my marriage into what I really wanted.

Ohhh, sister! This was one of the hardest decisions I’ve ever had to make, and I couldn’t have done it without the women in my life, my amazing clients, and my extended female tribe—a tribe I’m going to lovingly invite you to join throughout the course of this book.

That summer evening, staring up at the Santa Cruz sky, I felt so sorry for myself. Then, I remembered my spiritual work and turned my attention inward to
a connection with something bigger than me. I found the part of me that was holding on for dear life, clenched in pain, and I turned toward it. Embracing my own fear and shame, I offered myself some kindness, and a flood of tears followed. The sweet pressure release that only comes from a good, long, messy cry opened up my consciousness, and I slowly began to unwind and feel my body again.

In that deep and profound surrender, I turned toward myself. In that moment of reconnecting with myself, I suddenly felt connected with all that is. I felt connected to all women, everywhere who had struggled with money. I felt connected to my grandmother and my great grandmother... I could even, in that moment, perceive the millions of women around the world who are stuck in uncomfortable and even abusive situations because of a lack of money. At that moment, the sun beamed through the clouds, and I glimpsed a future that would allow me to make a greater contribution and reach great fulfillment.

So like any self-growth junkie dedicated to pursuing (insert sarcastic tone here) “an exalted life of purposeful conquest and magical manifestation,” I decided to make a deal with the Universe. In all seriousness, that night, I turned my life over to something bigger than myself and asked for help. I made a deal with God, whispering to an angel-shaped cloud that was passing overhead: “If you can get me out of this pain, God, if you can help me make my own money and find freedom, I’ll dedicate my life to helping women around the world who are struggling and stuck because of financial dependence.”
And so it was that within moments of my plea, I had an idea that would bring me over $100,000 of income in less than three months. In that flash, I saw clearly how I could use the women’s interview series I had just launched to attract my soon-to-be clients, creating immediate cash flow and changing the future of my business forever. And it worked. I moved out of the RV and into a gorgeous ocean view home in Santa Cruz, and the financial freedom that had once been just a dream began to become a reality. I believe the commitment I made that night gazing at the clouds has made it possible for me to (1) help tens of thousands of women launch global businesses and (2) build my own million-dollar company.

I had always dreamed of making money online—money that showed up in my inbox. I had heard about this phenomenon from colleagues and business gurus. But I always thought it was only for the computer tech geeks of Silicon Valley who had cracked some sort of magic, secret internet code with highly complex passwords and mad technology skills. Nevertheless, I went ahead and launched my business based on the idea I received from that divine guidance, and lo and behold, it took off right away. I made tens of thousands of dollars online in just a few weeks. It was like a miracle to me, kind of like winning the lottery.

In my previous life as a school teacher in Iowa, it had taken me more than three years to make what I made from that one program that sprung from my divine inspiration. And not only was I making more money than I ever imagined in such a short time, but I was serving women I loved working with from all over the
globe. In fact, I had engaged an online tribe of more than 5,000 women almost overnight. That number would grow to nearly 75,000 readers as my company became a million-dollar organization in just a couple of years.

Does it sound impossible? It isn’t! Stay with me, and keep reading. I’ll show you how you, too, can create incredible success in your business.

You Can Do It, Too—Really, You Can

So you might ask, “Can a woman like me, with just the spark of an idea, actually start a business and make money?” Yes! Can those of us who have bodies that still get twisted up from stress, who have failed marriages, who have relied on others for financial security, or who are fundamentally imperfect in a myriad of ways actually start and run successful businesses? The answer is yes! You don’t need to have reached some distant peak of intellectual nirvana or spiritual enlightenment to build a successful business and make a massive contribution on the planet.

If I can do it, you can do it. I promise!

What you’re about to experience through reading this book is a roadmap that has helped thousands of my clients build successful and sustainable businesses. These clients include authors, health practitioners, consultants, coaches, manufacturers, retailers, real estate agents, day spa owners, healers, clothing designers, aspiring public speakers, restaurant owners, and many other types of professional women. They’ve all chosen to thrive through building businesses on their own terms. This roadmap can work for you, too—really!
Over the last decade, I have invested nearly $500,000 in my own business training, and I have over 18 years of personal growth education under my belt. With this knowledge, I’ve built three successful businesses of my own, which has put me in a unique position to show you step-by-step how to begin making money using your gifts. On the pages that follow, I’ll share the very best of what I teach my clients over the course of several intensive business training programs and our Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy.

*Women Rocking Business* will provide you with an in-depth, how-to guide that’s filled with integration exercises and real-life case studies you can apply right away to help you build your own business. As you read these pages, you will:

- Heal any places in your life where you’ve been hurt by money so that you can make more of it.
- Learn how to build a support network of entrepreneurial sisters so that you don’t have to feel alone in your business endeavor.
- Clarify your offering for the world.
- Choose a business direction.
- Discover the secret to not burning out.
- Learn how to use the power of the internet and online marketing to find and enroll your ideal customers.
- And much more!

With this map and the support systems I will lay out for you, you’ll always have a plan you can return to as your business grows and develops.
Chapter by chapter, I will invite you to challenge the core beliefs that may be holding you back from building the business you dream about. Perhaps you were taught to work hard with your nose to the grindstone. Maybe you were told that work can’t be fun or that you have to be “realistic” about what’s possible. Maybe you were encouraged to be nice, to be quiet, to minimize your accomplishments, and to dim your own light.

For 20 years now, I have been working in the fields of women’s empowerment and women’s leadership, and I’ve spent the last seven of those years completely immersed in helping thousands of women start and grow businesses that are successful beyond their wildest dreams—in spite of (and building upon) their limiting beliefs and the real-life “shero’s” journeys they’ve been through.

You will come to see that each precious moment of your own “shero’s” journey has provided the building blocks for your business and the authentic marketing platform that will attract your ideal clients, customers, and students.
How to get the most VALUE from this book

You’ll get the most bang for your buck by reading this book from cover to cover, chapter by chapter. Each chapter includes self-reflection exercises and templates for clarifying your branding message and marketing plans. I promise we’ll get to everything that’s important for your next step. But I’ll encourage you to slow down enough that you can tease out the message and business direction that not only lies within your heart, but that—most importantly—speaks to the hearts of your waiting clients and customers.

The degree to which this book will change your life is the degree to which you’re willing to follow the steps and complete the exercises. And so I ask you, will you commit? The people who are waiting for you are depending on your ability to actually do the work.

Women Have Particular Gifts for Business

But wait a minute—don’t you have to curb your femininity in order to be successful in business? That’s what we’ve all been told, right? In years past, as we entered the business environment, women had to shed aspects of feminine creativity and intuition in order to survive. We’ve dressed in both the literal and metaphorical male power suit and lived by masculine rules. Countless women still struggle with the fear that to succeed in the marketplace, they have to sacrifice their true nature, even sell their souls.

Yet, when you look out across the world of startups, entrepreneurial endeavors, online and home-based businesses, and self-employed independent
contractors, you see women rocking and improving the world of business. Over the last 15 years, women have stepped into entrepreneurship in significantly greater numbers than men at a rate that’s 1.5 times the national average.¹ And women have good reason to start businesses: We’re creators and visionaries, but we’re also pragmatists. We’re starting businesses because we want it all—the career and the family—and there’s no reason why we shouldn’t have it.

We’re starting businesses because we understand the challenge of facing a three-hour commute while raising children and still maintaining some time for ourselves. We’re starting businesses because we’re sick and tired of being in a position of monetary dependency, and we’re ready to claim our financial freedom and self-determination. We want to be the masters of our own schedules. We want to share our deeply innovative gifts with the world. We want to work for ourselves on our own terms without compromising the natural female instincts inside us.

It may be that throughout history, women have been accused of people-pleasing, conflict-avoiding, and perpetually putting others’ needs before their own. But guess what? It’s exactly because of these very qualities that we’re now excelling in business.

Women are gifted at prioritizing the needs of others. We have an intuitive understanding of how to create meaningful connections and exceptional working relationships with clients and colleagues that give us what I lovingly refer to in chapter 9 as “a cooperativehe advantage.”

It’s true that women have unique talents we’re meant to bring to the world of business. Yet, according to Women owned Business in the 21st Century Report put out by the Department of Commerce Economics, our businesses are more likely to fail. The report reveals that a staggering 95% of us don’t break through the six-figure barrier, go on to have the larger impact we want to have, or make the contributions we desire to make.

Well, I’m here to tell you that you can overcome these odds! I’ve found in my work with thousands of female entrepreneurs over the years that when we remain in alignment with women’s values, we can build businesses that flourish.

So this book isn’t about teaching you how to be successful at business according to men’s rules. Nope! It’s about teaching you to be successful at business as a woman—as your true self—and helping you become an influencer yourself, changing the way business today is actually done. I will lay out a specific plan for building your business in a way that honors work-life balance, so your work can support you financially and fit into your life. You won’t have to settle for a life that fits around an overly busy work schedule.

You’ll learn principles to bypass many of the roadblocks that women encounter when they attempt to learn business strategy, marketing, and sales through old-school traditional pedagogy. It’s a new day, and the opportunities are great. We now have the world at our fingertips, which brings us both great possibility and a very real responsibility.

The approach in this book honors your innate feminine values while helping you empower yourself and at the same time empower others, rather than
having power over them. I'll show you how to run a successful business as a place of collaboration and contribution, rather than competition and greed.

Women thrive on collaboration. That's why I've built a community of women who help each other, and you can become a part of it for your own benefit and the benefit of the other women in the community.

Women carry an innate awareness of the needs and challenges of our times and often feel a deep sense of social responsibility. We have an opportunity to build businesses that champion and usher in a much-needed social change.

Over the years, together with others, my company has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for women and children in Indonesia, the Amazon rainforest, and Liberia. I'll show you how to align with organizations so that your fundraising efforts for them can actually help you build your business. As you give back, you will also receive and grow!

The Dalai Lama has said...

The world will be saved by the Western woman.

I don't believe the Dalai Lama meant “me” or “you.” He meant all of us as a group. We, as a gender and as a society, now have the collective awareness, strength, and compassion to be the problem-solvers and healers the world needs. Of course, we aren't obligated to save the world. In fact, I believe if we truly want to help heal the world, we have to do it from a place of joy, through
blissful contribution. The world doesn’t need more people who are out to “rescue” the “helpless.” Instead, in the words of beloved author and philosopher Howard Thurman, “what the world needs is people who have come alive” and can contribute to the empowerment of others.

I’ve seen firsthand that when women learn about marketing and entrepreneurship through this lens, they’re better positioned to implement entrepreneurial strategies and create success.

You’ll begin to see the exchange of money in business as not just for material gain but also for spiritual fulfillment. I’m committed to providing you with a wake-up call, to lighting a “fire under your butt,” so to speak. I challenge you to proclaim what you’re meant to say and give to the world so that you can make the difference only you were born to make.

What About Men? Can They Use These Tools As Well?

Men can absolutely use the tools laid out in this book to help them be successful. Because we’re all a unique combination of masculine and feminine qualities, we can utilize both masculine and feminine tools to create our own version of success.

In fact, some of my most trusted business mentors are men. I turn to men in part because some of them have been at it longer than a lot of us women have! In fact, throughout history men have frequently paved the way. I believe we as women thrive even more when we have men who support us and believe in us.
Desire is Your Yellow Brick Road

So you know you want to succeed in business, and you now know that being a woman can be an advantage in many ways. But is there some “secret sauce”? People ask me about this all they time: “How did you come to train thousands of women to start businesses? How did you get where you are today?” The answer is: I followed my desire.

My friend and mentor Janet Attwood, the bestselling co-author of The Passion Test, has helped thousands of would-be visionaries, including me, launch successful livelihoods. Her method involves doing a thorough inventory of your passions and using those impulses and insights to make major life and career decisions. Janet once told me something that forever changed my life. “Sage,” she said, “your desires aren’t necessarily your destiny. Your desires are stepping stones on the path to your destiny.”

Wow, did I need to hear that! You see, nearly a decade ago, I was lost. When I quit my teaching job, I didn’t know what to do with myself at first. I knew deep down I needed time to explore my interests before going full bore on my next career path. Finally, I allowed myself to do something I’d been longing to do for years—I let myself paint. I had studied art in college, and putting color on canvas nourishes a deep part of my soul. Even though I knew that choosing the career path of an artist would be too isolating for my personality, something told me that if I just allowed myself time to paint, more would be revealed.
My husband and I sold everything we had and moved into my grandpa’s motor home to “follow our dreams.” That utopic vision didn’t last, as you’ve already seen, but I did make progress with my artwork. So I dove straight into creating my first batch of paintings, and before long, I started making greeting cards and prints, selling them in bookstores and health food stores. I even got to the point that I was making several thousand dollars a month from my art!

I loved painting, but something in me remained deeply unfulfilled with the focus on art. The truth is that I’m too people-oriented to be trapped behind a canvas day-in and day-out. I felt there was something else for me to do.

I told my art teacher, an incredible artist named Mara Friedman in Eugene, Oregon, about my journey. Her jaw dropped open in awe. “It’s rare to see an artist monetize their art within just a few months of launching their career. Would you teach a class for young artists about how you made money from your art so quickly?” she asked. Happily, I said “Yes!”

Teaching that class was more rewarding for me than anything I had done in a long time. To support these young women in their creative process, to help them believe in themselves, see their own value, and lay out plans for making money, was like a dream come true. I was home.

In following my passion for art, I discovered that I’m not just an artist—I really am also a teacher. Just sitting behind the drawing board all day doesn’t light me up enough—I’m meant to inspire and educate groups. And while I loved teaching high school, in the K-12 school system I wasn’t able to teach the subject matter that’s meaningful to me. I despised teaching to the standardized test. With
the class for artists, helping them launch their art businesses, I began to discover my passion, and it would continue to evolve until I knew just where I belonged—teaching creative female entrepreneurs how to make money and build businesses that give back. In order to discover what it was inside me that desperately needed expression, I had to follow my desires like my own yellow brick road, one step at a time.

So your desires alone might not be your destiny, but I believe that in following them, you’ll be directed toward your true path and your next chapter. Ultimately, if you choose it, you’ll be led to launching a business that will leave a legacy.

You’ll need the fuel of your passion and desire to propel you to true success, where outer world achievements will be equaled by inner achievements of meaning, fulfillment, and significance. It’s the act of trusting what you want most that puts you on the journey of launching the right business for you—a business that will pull you out of bed in the morning, propel you through the darkest of times, bring you infinite joy, and satisfy your heart.

You may currently be going through your own personal or career transition, or you may be dreaming of doing something significant with your life that’s different from what you’re doing now. Or perhaps you want to skyrocket your already established business to a new level of contribution and success. Wherever you’re starting from, within you lies a seed of desire that will point you toward the opportunity that awaits you. Like I’ve often heard said, every
breakdown precedes a breakthrough to where you need to be for greater levels of fulfillment.

**What is DESIRE?**
The word “De-sire” comes from a Latin root (*sidus*) meaning star or heavenly body. Perhaps that heavenly body is guiding us from above?

My friend Derek Rydall, an incredible teacher and author, has a spiritual definition of the word “Desire”. “De-sire” can be broken down to “of the sire,” which translates to “of the Kingdom of God.” To me, this makes perfect sense. How else is God, Goddess, Source, the Universe, or whatever you might call the Supreme Intelligence and Creator of our world, able to communicate with us except through our desire? Yet, so many of us trample on our desire by ignoring it, denying it, or feeling unworthy of it or separate from it. And what’s worse, we aren’t taught to search inside for it.

My first question for you is: What makes you come alive? What is your deepest desire for your business and your life?

**Case Study: Entrepreneurial Goddess Emily Utter**

You don’t have to see the entire vision right now. Even if you’re not yet sure what your business wants to be, if you trust this process, it will help you make that discovery. You may only be aware of a piece of what you want, but that’s enough to begin. One of my clients, Emily Utter, looked me in the eyes after one of our client retreats and said, “Sage, I’m not even sure what this business is supposed to be. All I know is that I want to work with people I love, and I want a business that brings me freedom!”
I could relate to her on every level. So many of us crave a business that allows us autonomy, choice, and a flexible schedule. At the time, Emily was a consultant who was bored with her work and always needing to push the agenda of her clients, while secretly desiring the freedom to travel the world and help people in a more meaningful way.

Well, that’s exactly what she created. Emily called me earlier this year on her way to Thailand and shared, through tears, that she had just completed her first online course to generate over six figures in income in just a few months. She was on her way to Asia to celebrate.

Emily is like me, and she may be like you, too. She wants to give fully and help people change their lives for the better, but without compromising her freedom. We laid out a schedule and plan for her that I’ll introduce in Chapter 7—a plan that’s allowed her to work 12 days or less per month with the flexibility to travel internationally, attend workshops, go to festivals and events, and launch what has now become a successful, soon-to-be seven-figure business leading workshops and online courses that support adventure-seeking entrepreneurs.

The two of us recently made the journey to the Burning Man Festival in Nevada with our fishnet stockings and fur coats. Emily and I share a desire to create a business that gives us the freedom to explore all of life, and that’s exactly what we’re doing. To find out more about Emily’s work, visit http://www.emilyutter.com.

Emily and I didn’t get some special certification that allows us to do what we love with a schedule that gives us freedom and abundance. What we did can
be taught and learned so that you can have it, too. That’s the purpose of this book!

**The Journey We’ll Be Taking Together**

I promise to do everything in my power to help you discover your deepest desire, build your business, and thrive financially. I promise to show you a formula for reaching your clients and customers in a way that is authentic to you, that honors your feminine nature, that keeps you connected instead of isolated, and that also utilizes your inner masculine nature when appropriate. I will lay out a balanced plan that allows you to become all you can be, while still taking good care of yourself.

So, Entrepreneurial Goddess—is it OK if I call you that?—let’s start by walking you through an exercise of visioning what you want your life and business to look like. Whether you have the desire to birth a purposeful new business or take your current business to the next level, I’m going to encourage you right now to trust that desire.

**Tapping Into YOUR Innermost Desires**

With “of the Kingdom of God” as our translation for *desire*, let’s assume for a moment that the Universe, God, Goddess, or whatever name you have for Source, is using your desires to communicate what you need to do. You’re designed to be a channel for your gifts, from which your purposeful business arises, and this begins with getting in touch with your innermost desires.
What do you already know you’d love to do? Let’s say you know that you want to be on stage, to be sitting in a garden for hours counseling people about deep matters of the heart, or selling your favorite homemade scones at a café of your very own. Maybe you know you want three-day work weeks or to generate enough money to donate to the women’s shelter down the street.

For now, let’s suspend the need to strategize or plan and just focus on capturing the essence of your desire. Begin right now, right where you are. I believe the fact that you’re reading this book is evidence that you have everything you need to fulfill your deepest desires and most magnificent expression of your purpose, already tucked away in the center of your soul.

Keep in mind that books are transformational tools, meant to be written in, marked up, highlighted, and underlined. So, don’t be precious about these pages! Go for it!

**Integration**

**Tapping into YOUR DESIRE**

*This process is about uncovering your deepest desires and visions for your next business chapter. These questions are powerful. Trust the process!*
1. What in your life is holding you back from living your desires?

2. What needs to change / shift to allow you the space for your desire?

3. What about your career path isn't working?

   
   *Give yourself an entire page or pages to reflect on this. We weren't taught to reflect on what we want as a regular practice, so be gentle with yourself if it feels clunky at first. Do this repeatedly. Check in about your desires weekly.*

5. Describe 3 dream business visions you've had in writing.

6. How do you most want to serve and contribute to people?

7. What do you want your business to feel like?

8. What would your ideal work schedule look like?

9. If you were doing exactly what you want in your life, you would be:

10. As you experience success, how do you want to build in giving back to the world?

**Are You Ready to Make a Commitment?**

Now that you have a better idea of your desires, I'm going to be bold and blunt: I challenge you to commit to the process in this book all the way through to
the end. Your customers will thank you for it, as will the future you, who will be ecstatic to wake up every day doing what you love! Doesn’t that sound amazing?

The first step to making this commitment is to sign a commitment contract. Keep in mind that contracts are binding—they mean something. Signing a contract and following through will strengthen your relationship with yourself and your ability to achieve business success. Signing a contract and not following through will ultimately weaken your relationship with both yourself and your future customers/clients.

Sister, there’s no better feeling in the world than waking up to a business of meaning and clients you adore! Are you ready?

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**Women Rocking Business Commitment Contract**

Welcome! I’m thrilled to have you on this business-building journey! Congratulations on saying YES to yourself, your dream, your future customers, your impact, and your income! Please read these commitments out loud (in a mirror is powerful), and POST the contract somewhere you can see it.

I, (state your name)________________________, hereby commit to myself, my future customers and clients, and my business. I am willing to do whatever it takes to create a financially sustainable livelihood doing what I love. I’m willing to take massive action even when it feels uncomfortable. I’m committed to working through the steps laid out in this book even when I find myself stuck in resistance, disbelief, or self-doubt.

I commit to being gentle with myself, to stepping forward even when it feels unfamiliar or scary, and to staying out of overwhelm by doing one thing at a time.

I commit to taking responsibility for my life, my business, and my results. Finally, I commit to loving myself and my dreams, no matter what.

Sign: ________________________________

Date: ______________________________
Let's do this thing, Goddess…Together!

Love, Sage

Still feel confused about your desires and how they relate to your business direction? Hop online, and grab my virtual guidebook. You’ll learn my 3-step process for “Purpose Clarity.”

Women Rocking Business VIRTUAL GUIDEBOOK
BREAKTHROUGH BONUS TRAINING #1:
A Purpose Clarity Audio

With this book, get exclusive access to the 3 Steps to Clarify Your Life Purpose & Make Money Living it Audio Interview with Sage & Darius Barazendeh

(You’re going to love this!)
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