



EP. 113

## **Starting A Business And Keeping It Real With Jackie Nguyen Of Cafe Cà Phê: From Miss Saigon National Tour To Boss Babe In The Mobile Coffee Biz**

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### **Sheila Bella:**

Who am I to share my story? Nobody's going to care. Who am I to start a business? Nobody's going to buy. Who am I to lead all these people right now? I don't know what the heck I'm doing. Why is there money in the bank? That can't be mine, no way, no way. Who am I to be doing big things right now? Like who do I think I am? That is basically what imposter syndrome sounds like. And no matter what stage of the game that you're in, whether you've been in business for a long time or you're just starting out, it doesn't really go away. Newsflash, you guys welcome to Pretty Rich Podcast. Today, we're going to be talking all about starting a business and keeping it real, keeping it at a hundred with the one and only Jackie Nguyen. Can't wait for you to listen to this. Here we go.

Welcome to Pretty Rich Podcast where you're totally the heroine of your own story. I'm your host, Sheila Bella. And I built a seven figure PMU beauty biz and a seven figure online business without a degree, without a fancy website or a sugar daddy. And if you and I hang out on here long enough, you're going to start to believe that you can do it too. How about that for a side effect of listening to this podcast, because you really can. I know you think, I don't know you, I have no idea who you are, but I do. I really, really do because I am you. I was you and I believe we are all on

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the same journey together. My perfect shop didn't exist, so I created it. The job I wanted, wasn't hiring me, wanted nothing to do with me. So I skipped the line and hired myself as CEO. Just like you can.

So consider me your secret beauty biz BFF in case you need to be reminded on a weekly basis that power is never just handed to you. You have to take it. Are you ready beauty boss? Let's jump in. Welcome back richies. What's going on? So excited to have one of my good friends on today's show. I can't wait to introduce you to her. So her name is Jackie Nguyen. She was born and raised in beautiful San Diego, California. She is in the musical theater world and she is actually the very first Vietnamese actress to portray Kim in Miss Saigon, which is a Vietnamese character. Anyway, you'll hear her story, but her tour suddenly ended when COVID happened. And she has pivoted, made a big change into starting her very own Vietnamese mobile coffee shop. And she is a wiz at documenting everything on social media, like the journey, the ups, the downs, the realist, it's like a reality show for starting a business. And I was just so inspired by her and that's why I wanted to bring her on here today.

We're going to talk all about the **power of vulnerability** when starting a business. And my observations are, I feel like a lot of beauty entrepreneurs don't do this enough or just entrepreneurs in general. People think that they just should show up only when it's perfect, but that's so boring. That's so boring. Perfection is uninteresting. Listen, everything changed for me the day I realized that we're all the same, like *Victoria's secret models fart*. Okay. No matter how pretty, how much money, how famous somebody is for sure they fart. Yeah. After having like too much Mexican food with a ton of beans. Okay. Yeah. Even Giselle rips a long wet one sometimes, which also means everyone has **imposter syndrome**. Everyone is insecure. Like I've met some of the wealthiest and most attractive people and after having a long, deep conversation with them, I learned that their inner middle schooler is very much alive inside.

We all want to be *loved*. We all want to *belong*, that's why I'm not afraid to apologize or be vulnerable because anyone who says that they can't relate to that as lying, lying. And I think when you're vulnerable, it gives other people permission to just be,

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to focus on **impact** rather than **income**. I do think that income is just a byproduct of putting other people first. You're going to hear Jackie say this a little bit later, but she does admit that the *culture* of her company is the most important thing. Before the coffee, it's all about the culture and that hospitality and like, yeah. I mean, that's really what people want, a human experience through a brand. So before we get to Jackie, I just want to read the review of the week, the review of the week. Okay. So this one is from Scallywag.

Guys, I love reading your reviews. I love it. I love it when you guys post reviews for me, because it really helps out this show, this tiny little show that I do for my tiny office. Okay. So she says this podcast is absolutely one of the best out there. Okay. Guys, by the way, when I read these reviews, I don't read them before I read them on the air, on the air. Yeah. I'm literally reading them for the first time as I'm recording. So anyway, Scallywag, Pretty Rich Podcast is absolutely one of the best out there. I mean this from the bottom of my heart, even though I am way older than Sheila, I want to be her when I grow up. She is a beautiful shining light who is so brave and is willing to be totally vulnerable and totally herself with each podcast she makes.

It is amazing to me that she has suggested that she herself is not very smart when I find her to be incredibly brilliant in her strategies and helping PMU artists break down plans to build their business. I am an esthetician and I wish that this podcast had been around years and years ago. Her beautiful, sweet voice and her sincerity in wanting to help everyone listening is totally apparent when she is speaking. I love how comfortable she is with herself. Run, don't walk, if you want to work with someone who truly has your best interest in mind. Thank you. I'm blown away by your words. Scallywag, I wish I knew what your Instagram was so I could screenshot this and tag you. I so, so appreciate you. And to anybody else who decides to leave a review this week, who knows? I might read yours next week. Guys, thank you so much for supporting this show from its humble beginnings. It means the world to me.

Speaking of humble beginnings, we are going to be interviewing Jackie Nguyen, who just started **Cafe Ca Phe**. Here she is. Welcome to Pretty Rich Podcast. What up you guys. I have Jackie Nguyen here, CEO of **Cafe Ca Phe**, Kansas city's first

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Vietnamese coffee shop. Yeah. And you told me that it's the only mobile Vietnamese coffee shop in the entire USA.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yes, that's me. I just opened it.

**Sheila Bella:**

How long have you had it open?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Technically it's not even open. I've done only soft openings for like three ... Yeah, so my grand opening is in two weeks. So I guess like three weeks of just popups and soft openings.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah. Okay. So Vietnamese coffee. And I live in LA. I don't think I've heard of Vietnamese coffee before. I've heard of Colombian coffee. I didn't know Vietnamese coffee was like a thing and now I'm all curious.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. So Vietnamese iced coffee, you can get pretty much in any Vietnamese restaurant. It's like really strong dripped coffee with condensed milk. It's so addicting. So good. And what makes my coffee shop different is that I'm actually using beans from Vietnam. And it's funny that you say you've never heard of Vietnamese coffee, but if you've ever heard a Folgers or Maxwell House or any of those like random brands, you're actually drinking coffee from Vietnam, but you just don't know that. Yeah.

**Sheila Bella:**

Oh, I didn't know that.

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**Jackie Nguyen:**

So Vietnam is actually the second largest export of coffee in the world, but no one knows what that. [crosstalk 00:09:02].

**Sheila Bella:**

Okay, so you are the CEO of Cafe Ca Phe and I'm so excited for your grand opening. I'm so excited to see you document that on the gram. You always do such a great job. You bring us into your world. But before all this, before all this Vietnamese coffee, you becoming on your way to becoming a Vietnamese coffee mogul in Kansas city, tell us about Jackie and the jobs that you've had. What have you been doing this whole time?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Oh girl. So me who I am. I'm Vietnamese American, first-generation. I am from San Diego, California, born and raised, and I went to Cal State Fullerton to actually study musical theater. Something you're very familiar with. I'm sure your listeners know a little bit about you, but-

**Sheila Bella:**

How very Orange County of you.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Very, very orange county of me. And I studied musical theater and then I moved to New York after graduation and I lived in New York for about 10 years doing musical theater. So I did a lot of Broadway tours, a lot of international tours. I did about five productions of Miss Saigon as you would know as well. And I did an international tour of Hair, My Fair Lady, another one of Miss Saigon. So I have done musical theater for a really long time for my adult professional career. But when I was in New York as an actor, I also catered, I babysat, I nannied. I worked at Starbucks for eight years. Anything that I could do to try and get money to audition in New York, I did.

**Sheila Bella:**

Money to audition. Money to audition. That's so interesting.

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**Jackie Nguyen:**

Because you do not get paid to audition. So I had to try and supplement that. I would cater and then I would wake up. So my typical day in New York was I would wake up around 4:00 in the morning, work at Starbucks for about five hours, go to three auditions in New York, finish that, go babysit three kids. Then after that, I would cater at night. So like that was the circle of the things that I would do.

**Sheila Bella:**

Oh my gosh. I can't even imagine. So you're used to the grind. That's actually very entrepreneurial, Jackie.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yes. I did not realize that though at the time. I didn't have an entrepreneurship. I didn't even know like what that even meant. And now that I've liked dived into business and stuff, I've realized that that lifestyle prepared me for this.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah, I see that now. And like audition and preparing you for rejection.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yes. Every day was a rejection. Every day. A hundred rejections for a maybe, not even a yes, like for a maybe. So I did that for 10 years in New York every day, which is crazy. So yeah, up until this year actually, I was on the Broadway revival tour of Miss Saigon. I did that for about 18 months and then I lost my job due to COVID. So our show closed early.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah. I saw that. It was like unexpected. That's it.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

And it was done. Yeah.

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**Sheila Bella:**

I was so sad for you guys.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah, we were devastated. I mean, we didn't know. None of us knew at the time of COVID of course when it first happened. We just thought our show was going to maybe be put on hold for a month. But then that week we got a phone call from our producers on Zoom saying that our job was completely done and that most-

**Sheila Bella:**

Sorry, did you even have a final performance or is it just that Zoom call?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

No, no final performance. Nothing. Yeah. So like about a hundred people, cast and crew lost their jobs and then like then all Broadway shutdown and it's still shut down for almost another year. So we all kind of were just lost and just fend for yourself and kind of figure it out until things come back or the art.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah, dude, when you do a show too and you're with people for that long of a time, that is like your life. So to be cut, have the umbilical cord of musical theater, right? Being married to [crosstalk 00:13:53] cut so abruptly and so early, I'll bet y'all were like, "What now?" Oh, my-

**Jackie Nguyen:**

It was so hard. I mean, we still had like makeup boxes packed with all of our makeup. Our trunk still had our ... because when you travel on the road, you get a trunk that you can put like your winter clothes and because you're on the road for so long. We still have possessions on the road with us and we were just kind of sent home and most of us didn't get our belongings back for like three months. So it was like, and these people that I see every single day for 18 months, I haven't seen since March. So yeah, it was really hard. It was one of the saddest moments because you get so attached to a show and you don't get to see these people anymore.

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**Sheila Bella:**

You didn't have a cast party or anything like that. Like a closing-

**Jackie Nguyen:**

No, nothing.

**Sheila Bella:**

That's so sad especially you guys are so tight.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. We were balling. All the girls became so close. We had like a Zoom thing. We were just crying and wondering when we would see each other again.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah, would you guys reopen, you think after all this is over? You think you guys will go back on tour?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

I don't know. So far they said no, so it's just done. Yeah.

**Sheila Bella:**

Oh my gosh. For those of you guys would know what it's like to be involved in a show, I'm sure you can relate, but it's like, what would you call it? Yeah, they're just like your family. What would you relate it to? Like coworkers, but it's closer than that.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

I want to say like the experience of people, if you've gone to a summer camp, how close you get during the summer camp, but that times a million because you eat, you sleep, you become like you travel with these people for months and then you just kind of, I don't know, like a football team or I don't know. It's just really [crosstalk 00:15:57].

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**Sheila Bella:**

Like a team slash family. Yeah, I've met a lot of my best friends through Miss Saigon. Yeah. That's so crazy. Okay. And then when did you decide that you wanted to now start Cafe Ca Phe? Like immediately after that or, I mean, I'm sure there was a grieving period.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

No, I mean, I had actually a year into tour, knew that I wanted to shift out of musical theater for a while because I was actually dreading going back to New York and doing the hustle again. I did not like being, because I actually turned 30 on the road last year. And for some reason that age to me really hit me hard, and I looked at my bank account and I looked at all the things that I owned, which was really nothing. I didn't even have a car. So it was like, I didn't know if I wanted to go back to New York and do the grind and the hustle and all of that hustling was going to be at the liberty of other people and I didn't like that anymore.

So then when I was on the road of Miss Saigon, I got the idea to own my own business and I didn't know what it was going to be yet. But at that time, I was just like, I just don't want to go back to New York. I just don't know if I want to be an actor anymore, because as much as I love acting and as much as I really love performing, the money and the consistency and all that stuff was just not happening for me and that wasn't what I wanted for my life.

**Sheila Bella:**

So you wanted something more consistent and more stable?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

A little bit, or if it wasn't going to be consistent or stable, I wanted it to be at my mercy at like, I get to control it versus a casting director because like [inaudible 00:17:54]. Yeah, because I would go out there and I would hustle and hustle and grind and grind. And I could literally do everything that I could to make this audition perfect. But then at the end of the day, it's not my decision whether or not I get a job or whether or not I make money, it was up to the discretion of a casting director or

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someone else, a choreographer. It was someone else's decision whether or not I got to work and I did not like that anymore. It was fine for my twenties. It was fun. It was really like liberating and free and wild. But then the minute I hit 30, I was like, "No, I do not want that anymore. I don't want that."

**Sheila Bella:**

Very relatable. I had a similar experience.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. I took a trip to Vietnam on a little bit layoff that we had actually right after I saw you in LA. And when I went to Vietnam, I was really inspired by the culture there obviously. I'm Vietnamese and I had only been to Vietnam one other time. And what I love about not just Vietnamese people but Asian people, is that customer service over there is very different. They treat you like family. You're not like a customer to them, you're like a daughter. You come to their restaurant, they're like, "Okay, we want to feed you. What do you want? Like, no, no, no, no, don't eat that, eat this. This is so good." And it's very different culturally. And I just love that. And so I was inspired by the hospitality of Vietnamese people and over there, coffee shops are like every single corner, more than Starbucks. Like more than how it is here in America how like corner, you can see the coffee shop.

It's like every other store is I shop there. And I had a lot of experience in the coffee industry. So about a year ago, I started coming up with the idea to open my own coffee shop. But because I was an actor and I had never owned my own business, I really took time to decide if that was going to be the direction I wanted to move in. So while I was still on tour, I would go to different coffee shops in different cities and sit down with the owner. And first of all, ask them if they loved it, if they loved owning their coffee shop.

And then number two, if it was lucrative, because that was one thing that I wanted to prioritize and not be ashamed of was making money. So the more that I interviewed people, the more I learned that it going to be lucrative, not like crazy lucrative, but consistent enough to make a good living. And that it was something

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that people love to do. So I was like, "You know what, I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it." And yeah. So about eight months of work with research, just research and slowly starting to brand myself, picking out things that I liked about coffee, things that I didn't like about coffee. But the pandemic really forced me to move pretty quickly with it because [crosstalk 00:21:21].

**Sheila Bella:**

How so?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

I mean, I originally was supposed to finish the show in August, this last August that just passed, but it finished in March. So that's like what April, May, June, July, August, five months of income that I lost, five months of work, five months of things that would keep me busy every day completely gone. So I was like, well, might as well start this coffee shop today. And so it forced me to kind of like work extra, extra, extra hard on starting it and launching it.

**Sheila Bella:**

And you did it during a pandemic.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yes girl.

**Sheila Bella:**

And then I was like, "What is going on? How is she going to ..." Because I was watching your IGTVs. First of all you guys, one of the biggest reasons why I have Jackie on here is because I look at her Instagram and I watched her journey even at the beginning stages of creating Cafe Ca Phe and I was like, "This is exactly what I would advise anybody who's new in business to do." You're just *documenting your journey* because I think what a lot of people in business think is that you need to have it all done all ready then you say, "I'm open for business," but that's boring. People want to see like the grind. You want people to invest in your journey and then you as a person. And what I've always loved about you is you wear your heart on your sleeve and you put it out there. So yeah, just watching you pivot to this dream

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into a mobile coffee shop, I was like, "Yes. Of course." Yeah, I was jumping up and down.

I know this episode is just getting to the good part, but hold on a second, I wanted to stop and ask you if you ever feel like a brow or lash robot, like are you constantly grinding, but you're never, ever free? Like you're the slave girl to your own business. Listen, you and I both know that the reason why you got into the beauty business to begin with is so that you can be your own boss. But if you're slaving away as a solopreneur, you're basically a slave to clients. Maybe you will know that you need to scale. Maybe you know you need to grow and expand, but you just don't know where to begin. The three things that every business owner needs in order to grow are strategy, systems and support. You can't grow without all three strategy systems and support. Enter **Pretty Rich Bosses**, my one on one coaching program that helps beauty entrepreneurs, just like you scale their businesses.

So if you feel like a factory worker, browse, lash, browse, lash, browse, lash, and you know you're just surviving but not really living, I can help get you there with just a little bit of guidance. We are offering complimentary 60 minute strategy calls. All you need to do is go to [sheilabella.com/apply](https://sheilabella.com/apply). That's [sheilabella.com/apply](https://sheilabella.com/apply). Do something the others aren't doing. Invest in yourself, invest in your business. Stop asking for advice from people who haven't done it themselves, super easy, type in your information and someone from my team will get back to you and set up that free call right away. Mentorship is the closest thing to a shortcut. You can't Google your way to success. You could, but it's going to take a while. Take a leap of faith, go to [sheilabella.com/apply](https://sheilabella.com/apply).

So how did the idea come about? You were like, "Okay, I'm doing this now. I have to do this now, what can I do to make this happen right now?" And was it mobile?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Well, because originally I didn't want it to be a mobile shop. I wanted like a regular brick and mortar, like location coffee shop, where people could come in and get their coffee every day. And when I moved to Kansas city from tour, which is a whole

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nother story, but I'm in Kansas city now. I started going to different places that looked like a good location for my coffee shop. And every time I would meet someone or talk to a lender for the bank, because I had no ... I mean, when I tell you, I started this company with every dime that I had from savings on tour, which is really not that much, I had no capital.

I started this company with pretty much no capital. And I would go to different banks, talk to different lenders, talk to different landlords. And because it was a pandemic, everyone was like, this is probably not going to be ... It's not going to work out because right now all the banks are working on trying to save small businesses. And then all the landlords are literally kicking people out because they're not being able to pay their rent and bars and restaurants were at the time, completely shut down for at least three months. And I was actually really discouraged because I was like, "Oh my God. I'm an idiot for starting a coffee shop during a pandemic. What am I doing? This is not right business move. This is not ..." Like I was so discouraged because it was so unknown, especially the food industry, so many people were trying to figure out what was going to be the best way to go about this, like delivery service or just all this stuff.

And so I sat down and kind of thought, should I just put this on hold until COVID is "over?" And I was like, "Maybe I can just go into a corporate job and start applying for different things." And I don't know, I just was really lost. And I actually have a consultant at the time, I still do, who helps me with all my coffee shop adventures. He also is a host of a podcast called **Keys To The Shop** and he offers consulting for just coffee shop owners. And he and I sat down. He was like, "Well, we can put this on hold, but you have so much momentum with your research. Would you ever consider doing something mobile?"

And I was like, "No, I do not want a food truck. That does not sound something like I want." And he's like, "Why?" I was like, "I don't know. It's just like, I want my ... I mean, like my romanticism sees like a coffee shop and the cuteness of that, but also like the community aspect." And he's like, "Why can't you create that in a mobile setting? You don't have to fit any type of mold of a food truck. You can make it however you want." I was like, "Yeah, right. Why not?" And so I actually just started researching

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food trucks and researching mobile shops and I saw that Europe and Asia, so many of their food things are mobile, like little carts on the side of like Italy and little gelato shops are on wheels.

And I was like, "You know what, maybe I can do this. Especially if I want to launch during a pandemic and launch where I can still serve my coffee, but it can still be socially distanced." I was like, "Maybe a mobile way is the way to go." Plus I really, when I have an idea and when I want to do something, nothing can stop me, honestly. I was like, "I can't let anything stop me." So I found, I don't know if this is the universe like blessing me, but I found a little tiny home for sale on Facebook and I just went and looked at it and I was like, "You know what? I think I can do this. I think I can do it." And I literally took my savings and I just bought this tiny home.

**Sheila Bella:**

This is tiny home on wheels.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Tiny home on wheels. And I was like, "I'm going to make a little coffee shop that can travel where people don't need to sit inside," because so many people were working from home or getting pick up services anyway for their food. I was like, "I can do this for coffee. Why not?" So I bought my little tiny home and used every single penny that I had and was like, "Let's do this. Let's start." And I just started. And yeah, it was a really huge jump, but I really think that you have to take huge risks if you want to get a big win, you have to. I wasn't going to just sit there. Yeah. And I feel like that is something that I also learned with acting and just even moving to New York itself was scary. Right. And I was like, "Well, if you want to be on Broadway, you got to move to New York."

So I did that and I got a Broadway tour. And to me that was growing up, my mom is a refugee. I'm first-generation, she came in to America from the war. To me, moving to New York was already like a dream come true. Right. And when I looked at that, I was like, "Oh, I accomplished that. No problem. I mean, it was hard, but I still did it." So when I look at being an entrepreneur and being a business owner, I had to kind of

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translate it and do this like mental switch, like Jackie, you moved to New York and you booked a Broadway tour. What makes you think you can't own a coffee shop and run your own company? Those dreams are possible, but you have to do the scary stuff.

**Sheila Bella:**

All that stuff builds character. And I think people and I say all the time like failure builds character, but success, I think builds character as well, maybe a little bit stronger. But in order to get to the success, you have to experience the failure because once you've done it once, right, and it doesn't even matter if it's related. Once you've had success once in anything and you know it was really hard to get it, you just have the confidence to go for it and forget anything else. So yeah, success definitely builds character and confidence because you're like [crosstalk 00:32:06] exactly the same what you said. Like I've done it once. I can do it again. What's the difference? Rejection is rejection. Risk is risk.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. Just a different subject topic, I guess.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah. It's very entrepreneurial and like going all in and then investing everything that you have. I'm so proud of you.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Thank you. I think it was also because I felt like I had nothing to lose. I had already lost my job. I don't have a car. I don't have a house, really no money. So like yes, I can invest all my savings and maybe I would fail, but what did I actually have to lose? I have just more to gain than I had to lose.

**Sheila Bella:**

That's so important. That's so important when you ... I think and I say it all the time, but that comfort is the enemy of success. And yeah, when you're comfortable, there's no catalyst, but then things changed for me too when I felt like I was at rock bottom, like I have nothing to lose. And then you start like, yeah, F it. Let's throw

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money into this, let's try this. Or at this point, like what? But I see people who are semi-successful, who just kind of like stay there because they're comfortable, but then it's not until something big really happens to them that they start thinking about what they really want, what is really aligned with your dreams? What dream is inside of you that you cannot die without seeing come to a reality? What really is it? And people don't ask those questions of themselves. And I love how open you are about this.

So what I noticed is that when you share your story on social media, first of all, it's so amazing and it's so relatable and I see that a lot of people are cheering you on. They're cheering you on. And so where did you ... did you learn this? Because I think it's a skill. Being transparent and content marketing is basically what you do doing, it's a skill, but it doesn't look like you're following a formula. But to me being like the marketing nerd that I am, it is a formula and you're following it perfectly. So is this learned?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Thank you. First of all, no. I am not following no damn formula. I wish I had enough money to invest in like a program in IG, whatever. But since I don't, I want to say majority of what I post is from my gut, what I feel like. Yes, I've Googled a few times like what time is the best time to post something? And-

**Sheila Bella:**

What type of content converts higher?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah, like what time of the day? Because I have a lot of friends and family in California, but also a lot of friends and family in New York. So I wanted to make sure that I knew I Googled like what time is the best. That was probably the first thing that I did. And then I looked up hashtags and how to use them best. But other than that, what I do with content, my captions, all that stuff is really just innate feeling that I get. And I think the one thing that I do do is I put myself in the shoes of my audience, the people that I want to reach out to, which is pretty much everyone, but a lot of the people that I want to reach out to are either people that are interested in

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coffee, interested in culture because the core of my company is not coffee, it's culture.

**Sheila Bella:**

Oh my gosh, that's like straight out of Seth Godin's book, have you read Seth Godin?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Mm-mm (negative).

**Sheila Bella:**

I'm obsessed. He's like a marketing genius, but go ahead. It's so interesting to me that your experience just taught you all this and it's in your gut. Go ahead.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Well, yeah, just trying to think of like when I follow people on Instagram, what captivates me? What do I like about Pretty Rich Podcast or Sheila Bella Microblading or who are the top people that I love following? What do they post?

**Sheila Bella:**

They share their story.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. And most of it is just being real, like honestly being real, not being fake and being willing to be real at the cost of being ugly and raw. And I think so many people are really afraid of being ugly. And ugly, I don't mean just like on the surface, like no makeup, not like that, but I mean ugly as in being like embarrassed and raw and crying and messy and messy in being like I'm selfish and messy being like I am not a perfect human being. I don't know what I'm doing. I am stupid. I am an idiot. I am like ... Those ugly pieces I think so many people are afraid of showing because they think that social media should be a place where you're just putting your best foot forward. But I don't think that that's what it is.

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Social media, it's like we're being social. It's like, who are you? You're not some plastic beautiful person on the daily. You are you, whoever you are, present with that. And so I really just ... I don't know. Again, it goes back to what do I have to lose? And I think there's a part of history about me. There are so many layers to me, but I have a condition called alopecia. And that is pretty much how I met you, Sheila.

**Sheila Bella:**

That's how we met.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. I about four, now five years ago I lost all my hair because I was really depressed and was like super suicidal. I went through a period in my life where I like let men and theater dictate my happiness. And so I went through this huge phase of depression where I lost all my hair and I was bald. I lost my eyebrows. I was complete, like I did not have any hair whatsoever for about a year. And I met you because you were doing a special promotion for people with alopecia and-

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah. We did alopecia day. It was so awesome to have-

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah, where you were going to eyebrows for free for like a select few and that's how I met you. I applied and we met and we ended up realizing I had all these friends in common. But when you lose all your hair and your eyebrows physically, you are completely stripped of your beauty and your vulnerability. And I think at that point, I was like, "I literally have nothing else to lose. I'm so vulnerable to people without even me trying." If I would go to the gym and I would walk around, it's like you're so stripped down. I could not hide that. I could not wear a wig. I couldn't paint on makeup. I just was like, "You know what? This is just truly me." And that really helped me be more vulnerable in general and-

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah. Oh, see it's character building.

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**Jackie Nguyen:**

It was. It was the worst time of my whole life.

**Sheila Bella:**

Wow. Wow. Wow. But it taught you so much.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

It did. It taught me about not caring what people think about you because they could think whatever they want to think and at the end, end of the day, that's their opinion. And then you carrying yourself in a way that only dictates your own happiness. And if I'm putting myself out there on social media, the only person that really at the end of the day has to live with that is myself. No one is me. If I'm posting something that's really raw and scary, it's me that has to live with that at the end of the day when I go to bed at night. So I would rather be myself 100%, put all my eggs in one basket, I guess, and really like the only thing I have to lose is nothing.

One thing that my mom has taught me because she had to move to America with nothing, is that I used to be really afraid to ask for help. That was something I was really afraid of. And she was like, "Well, what's the worst that could happen if you asked for help? What do you have right now? Nothing." And I was like, "Yes." She's like, "If you ask for help and they say no, you still have nothing. So you don't really lose anything." I was like, "Yeah." She's like, "But if they say yes, you have something. That's more than you already have even if it's like a little sprinkle or a penny. It's okay to ask." And that has really stuck with me for a really long time.

**Sheila Bella:**

Wow. Go mom. One of the things, I just go back to alopecia days. So I remember you wrote an article for Huffington Post, right? And about your experience at alopecia day or even before you were coming in. Yeah. Before you came in, you wrote an amazing article. And the part that I was really struck with was when you said, "I am allowed to want my hair back. I'm allowed to miss it. Don't say that this is a vain thing. But yeah, I'm allowed to miss it." Can I tell you something right now that actually made me cry? So I had a terrible argument with somebody on my

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husband's side of the family because I showed this particular person that beautiful article you wrote.

And I was so excited to be able to give these eyebrows to you. And I showed this person that article and this mfer said, "If eyebrows are the most important thing in your life, your priorities are clearly off." And I'm like, "What? She never said that. And you're allowed to miss your hair. You're allowed to want to look a certain way." I just, and to that actually, and I've never told you this, that article like put a rift between us and that person. Because it started a conversation actually that was very difficult to have, which is like, okay, well Sheila is in the beauty industry. We're technically like superficial. So I guess what it comes down to is you look down on that, like that's not a real job. That's not a real service. And then it started like all this other stuff that came out that, yeah, I guess that's how these people saw me.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

That's amazing that ... and I'm sorry that that was a catalyst for that, but it was like, it's good that that can be a conversation starter. And it's funny because I got a lot of not flack or anything, but when people see alopecians, they think, well, you're not dying because cancer patients who lose their hair, they are actually physically suffering from a disease and people with alopecia, the disease just attacks their hair follicles. And so we get a lot of flack, alopecians do being like, well, it's just hair.

And the thing I like to always say is like, "Okay, thank you. Thank you so much for that. I understand. Would you like me to shave your head and your eyebrows real quick and then see how you react? Like just for fun, let me just do that for fun. And let me just for two seconds ... but you, even if you didn't like that, your hair grows back." For people with alopecia, their hair growing back is sometimes not an option. And the loss of control in that is what is more devastating than the actual physical appearance.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah, loss of control.

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**Jackie Nguyen:**

And if you could not grow your hair back and yeah, like a physical thing should not be a priority, but something that you've been living with for so long and why do I need to apologize for that anyway? I am allowed to want eyebrows. I am allowed to want hair.

**Sheila Bella:**

It doesn't make you a superficial person.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

No, sorry. Human hair is part of the human experience. It's not like lipstick. Human hair that grows out of your head also has health benefits. Like nose in your hair helps you become less sick. It blocks bacteria. Nose on your eyelashes helps take dirt from your eyeballs. There are so many things that are not just superficial. And so, yeah. I mean, people cope differently and they react differently to certain things. And I think what's so misunderstood about the beauty industry too, is that it comes with confidence and it comes with like helping people's insides and not just their outsides.

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah. We do so much, especially when we deal with, alopecia day was one of the most beautiful days I've ever worked. Like every day could be like that. I mean, it was so magical. We had people crying. Typically, when you give somebody in the mirror, they're very grateful and they feel good, but alopecians when we gave them the mirror, I mean, it was like a whole makeover. Right. Yeah. It was like, it was so American to me. I was like, "Oh my gosh." But so yeah, I don't think I ever told you that, but that's something that I get a lot, especially from people who don't take the time to get to know me or walk in my shoes.

It's like, oh, okay. You're in the beauty industry. And also I think it's misunderstood that if you care even a little bit about how you look, it makes you a bad person. So I feel like that's really relatable to a lot of people listening right now. So I think it's really interesting how your experience with that, sharing, do you think that that time

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when you had alopecia and you bearing your soul and sharing your experience kind of like massaged and set the stage for you basically bearing the soul of Cafe Ca Phe now?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah, definitely. I mean, I've always been pretty unafraid to share my feelings too. I don't know if it's because that's how my mom is. And she truly believes that just being yourself is going to be like the best way. Yeah. She's unapologetic truly. And I feel like sharing my soul is going to be, it's also easy. When you really think about it, it's easy. It's just be yourself. Don't have to work that hard when you're already you and I just don't want to work that hard with social media. It shouldn't be that hard to share my opinions and myself.

**Sheila Bella:**

Or just life. I don't want to ... I feel the same way. Yeah. I don't-

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Why make it extra hard when life is already really hard?

**Sheila Bella:**

And you're enough. I think that's what it boils down to. It's like, people don't think that they're enough in their state with all of their flaws, but realizing that everybody is flawed, everyone is questioning their enoughness. So seeing you bear it all gives other people permission to be themselves and to shine their light and to not have to show up perfectly.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. And I don't ever do it to be some type of inspirational guru or anything. I do it because I think it is the right thing to do to be fruitful and to be, I don't want to lie. I really don't want to because when people will meet me at my coffee shop, I want them to see the same person that they see on my Instagram and my Facebook and all that stuff. I want them to be like, "Oh yeah, that is her." I don't know. It just is common sense to me to kind of like bare yourself as much as you can. Of course, and like, I understand there's need for privacy and I totally respect that. And I try not to

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be too out there, but also I'm running a business about community and people, right?

Coffee shops are hubs for community where people meet, they share a cup of coffee, they talk about their life or talk about work or school. And that's a place where I want people to feel safe. And in order for people to feel safe, they have to trust me. Right? And they have to trust that I am being myself. And so I hope that I don't know it would help my business. And I hope that when people see that-

**Sheila Bella:**

It doesn't look like that's your MO. It looks, it's so genuine. It doesn't look like it. It is super genuine. It's very natural, it's who you are. It's who I've always known you to be. And I just [crosstalk 00:51:10] so beautiful to marry that with starting a business. That artistry, that musical theateriness with starting a business. Quick question for you, who films your videos?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

So my friend Alana, her name is **Ilana Lieberman**. She and I created this summer project to make content because as someone with a musical theater background, being in front of a camera is not something strange. And I had this idea to, while I was creating my coffee shop, to create as much content as possible because I wanted people to follow along with my journey. And my girl Alana, she's also a content creator. She has her own YouTube page. You can follow her at **Ilana Lieberman**. And she actually moved to Kansas city temporarily for about three months to help me film all of my stuff in my basement.

**Sheila Bella:**

Really?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

So yeah. I went and got like a ring light and I bought one of those sheets to hang up and she had a really nice camera and I was like, "Let's fill them and let's edit. Every single week, let's make a video about the process of what I'm doing, whether or not

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it's good or not, let's just do it." Plus while working on a coffee shop, I wasn't having any income. I was like on unemployment. So I had more time to focus on creating some content because that's what I wanted. I wanted to have videos made where it could follow along my journey, because I never really had a YouTube video. I used to blog before, but in general. But yeah, so my girl actually helps me for three months helping me film all the content. And from now on, I think it'll just probably be me moving forward recording [crosstalk 00:53:13].

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah, every week. I love it.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah, so she helped me and she was actually also on the tour of Miss Saigon. And she and I of worked together for three months with filming and photographing and just talking about what would be ... looking at other companies and being like, "What do they do with their content?" I think also I'm not very original to be honest. I don't think I ... yes, everything that I've created is from myself, but there are people out there who are running completely successful businesses on their own and you got to do your research. Like I just research. I was like, "What are these big companies doing and how can I be more like them? What do I need to do? Oh, I need to make cool videos. Oh, I have to photograph my drinks and my coffee. Oh, I got to make a website and Instagram." So as far as that goes, I kind of just like looked at other people and saw what I liked from them and copied it, honestly. And that's okay I think to-

**Sheila Bella:**

No. That's what you should do. See what's trending. See what type of content is working. I love how you're doing it too. I hope you never stop doing weekly updates on how your business is because [crosstalk 00:54:38]. Okay, good. Because it's like a reality show. I love too that there's no pressure because you're just ... I love it because so many people in the beauty industry are still in the beauty industry where you feel like you have to show up perfectly. And even when it comes to your content, you can't show that you maybe don't have it together yet. People are just used to seeing

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people like Jeffrey Star and stuff like that and they just have it all together. Right. But they don't show-

**Jackie Nguyen:**

But where's the reality though? That's not real. I cry every other day. Like people-

**Sheila Bella:**

Me too.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

[crosstalk 00:55:19]. It's a scary world out there. It's a scary time and owning your own business is not easy. That doesn't come overnight.

**Sheila Bella:**

What have you learned thus far? What's the one thing that you've learned thus far in the short time that you've been in business?

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Girl, the one thing that I learned in this short time is that no one knows what they're doing. No one knows. And I say that because everyone who's starting their own business started with no knowledge and everyone pretends or they act like they know what they're doing. And then when you really ask them, they're like, "Oh, I really don't know. I'm just walking through it, hoping that I don't fall." And I was talking to you about imposter syndrome before we started this. And I wanted to address that. Sometimes I feel like I'm not actually owning my own or owning my own coffee shop just because like, what do I have to bring or why me? And so-

**Sheila Bella:**

Yeah, who am I to do this? How do I have all this money? Yeah, we were talking earlier and I'm like, "Why are you all waiting for me to speak right now?" Like even on

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Zoom when I have team meetings every morning, I'm like, it just runs through my head, but you just go with it. That's so true.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

And I've learned that about other business people. They also feel the same way, which is so comforting because sometimes I'll be like, "Oh my God, I'm so lost. What am I doing? Do people even like this? Am I making the right steps? Am I making the right decisions?" And then when I talk to other mentors or other business owners, they're like, "Oh, we feel that way all the time too." Like what? No way. And I'm like, "Yeah, that's how they feel and that's how I feel all the time." Like, I don't really know what I'm doing, but I just like, I'm trying it out.

**Sheila Bella:**

It's like the pre-show jitters. They never truly go away.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. Yeah. So I don't know. That's one thing that I have learned is that everyone else is the same. We're all kind of like kids trying to figure out how to walk. And I think that's just like pretty across the board. All of us are just trying to figure it all out at the same time. Some of us are just better at, I don't know, pretending like we have it all together than others.

**Sheila Bella:**

Oh my gosh. I can't believe time has flown by. It's already been an hour, but I feel like I could talk to you forever.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

I know.

**Sheila Bella:**

I love that we got to catch up. I would love to do this more even to Zoom just you and I. So lastly before we get off, can you tell everybody where could they find you on social and how can we come taste your coffee?

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**Jackie Nguyen:**

Yeah. So please follow my coffee shop. It's @CafeCaPhe, C-A-F-E C-A P-H-E. And that Cafe Ca Phe is kind of like a play on words, but caphe is how you say coffee in Vietnamese. So that's why my shop is named Cafe Ca Phe.

**Sheila Bella:**

That's so cool.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

You can find all my information [cafecaphe.com](http://cafecaphe.com) on our website. Yeah. And you'll find the link to my personal Instagram is at @JackieNguyenX and follow me on both platforms. I'm updating every single day and just having people follow along, people that like coffee or like culture or just kind of like you want to see how starting a business is going, definitely follow along, just because I posted all. The really crappy parts too because people need to know that it's not all fun. And then you can, if you're in Kansas city, I post my schedule every week about where I am, but you can, I'm going to start online ordering too. So there's going to be coffee beans and merch available online in November, so people are able to order my coffee online really soon. So keep an eye out on that. Yeah. And just find me on Instagram, Facebook, the whole shebang.

**Sheila Bella:**

I'll link all of that stuff in the show notes. Jackie, thank you so much for being here.

**Jackie Nguyen:**

Of course. Thank you, Sheila. You're the best.

**Sheila Bella:**

Until next time. Bye. Hey, thanks so much for listening to today's episode of Pretty Rich Podcast. If you want to continue the conversation longer, check me out on Instagram. It's my favorite place to connect with you guys @RealSheilaBella. I'm happy to answer any of your questions or simply to chat and get to know you better. And if you end up doing something super awesome like screenshotting this episode

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and reposting it your stories, that would put the biggest smile on my face. Don't forget to tag me. I appreciate every share and love feedback from my listeners.

Also, do you have my number? Do you have my number, because if we're going to keep hanging out, you should probably have my number so you can actually text me. That's right. You can text me at (310) 388-4588. And if you're sick and tired of doing business alone and you're interested in accelerating your success by hiring a business coach or joining our mentorship program called Pretty Rich Bosses, go ahead and just apply. Why not? Check it out. Go to [sheilabella.com/apply](http://sheilabella.com/apply), and we'll schedule a free strategy session with either myself or one of my advisors. And of course, I got to include my kids. So here to send us off our Beau and Grey. Grey, say share with your friends.

**Grey:**

Share with your friends.

**Sheila Bella:**

Please review my mommy on iTunes.

**Grey:**

[inaudible 01:01:42] iTunes.

**Sheila Bella:**

Thanks for listening.

**Grey:**

Thank you for listening. Hey Beau, can you tell everybody what our family motto is?

**Beau:**

Yeah, I can do hard things.

**Sheila Bella:**

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I can do hard things. Good job, buddy.

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