
Jaime Masters: Welcome to *Eventual Millionaire*. I'm Jaime Masters and today on the show, we have LuAnn Nigara. She actually has a real business. We were talking about this right before. It's called Window Works. It's in New Jersey. She's also been called a window treatment authority, which I thought was amazing. She has a podcast. It's called *A Well-Designed Business* podcast. Thanks, so much for coming on the show today.

LuAnn Nigara: Jaime, I'm so happy to be here. Thank you. This is really, actually just a tiny bit of a thrill for me. You're a leader in our industry here, so I'm very excited to finally meet you virtually in person.

Jaime Masters: I'm so excited because I was like, "Yes, I have one woman entrepreneur today on my schedule." I try. I so try and the fact that you have an insane business – we were just chatting before. You were like, "I've been in business 35 years." I'm like, "[Gasps] I'm so excited to have you here." Can you tell us a little bit about the beginning parts and diving into starting this business? And tell everybody what it is also.

LuAnn Nigara: Okay. Window Works is a custom window treatment awning retailer, and as you said, we're in Livingston, New Jersey. And I'm actually co-owners with my husband and our cousin, Bill. We started it together back in the early '80s, and it started – Originally, Window Works was actually a franchise, and it was a franchise that was born in South Florida. When we started our franchise, we were the 11th franchise in the system. And by the time the franchise was sold, one time was a happy sale, good for all of the franchisees. The second sale was basically a corporate rater, and that busted up the franchise.

But by the time it sold, there were over 100 units across the country. So, that was fun. And my husband was actually the franchisor for the state of New Jersey, so we had sort of two roles. We ran our own business, but then, he also recruited and sold to other people to have a franchise and then our team trained them.

Jaime Masters: Do you like the franchise model? People go back and forth, and one of my clients is a franchise lawyer. And it's like, do we start our own? Do we get a franchise? Tell me what you thought about that process at the beginning.

LuAnn Nigara: From the standpoint of our experience, the one thing that it did do was that it really – because a franchise, really, what is it? It's a cookie-cut system for running a business. So, from that standpoint,

it really teaches you the value of having a system for running your business. I know, for a fact, that my husband would've had the system anyway. This franchise that we had together was his second business, and he was a systems guy to begin with. But I don't know that any of the three of us could've lived with being a franchisee for our entire business life because you do have a lot of your wings are clipped because do it this way, don't do it that way.

But looking back, as young people, the value of this is how you write an order, this is how you execute a this, that is one thing now that we're constantly trying to teach people in business behind us that you've gotta have that foundation of your systems so that you can start to really scale up and duplicate yourself and all of the things that come with a successful business.

Jaime Masters: Yeah, it helps you hit the ground running a little bit faster, but it also costs quite a bit too, so you're paying money instead of the time that it would take you in order to do that. But, of course, if you don't have the experience, it's way harder to figure it out on your own. So, when did you guys not become a franchise then?

LuAnn Nigara: It was probably around '92, so maybe 10 years into it, the franchise disbanded. So, the thing for us is that because we were the first on in New Jersey and because, like I said, my husband's role was also to recruit and train, and our business was the training ground for the other 26 franchises in New Jersey, I can't say that – We always had the experience of almost being “the franchisor”. Do you know what I'm saying?

Jaime Masters: Yeah.

LuAnn Nigara: Because we were the hub here in Jersey, and we were the training ground and the teachers and so forth like that. So, at that point, we probably weren't deriving a whole lot of benefit from being a franchise, but I don't mean that in a negative way. It wasn't like we were ever like, “This is crazy. There's no value here.” There were other tangible benefits of being part of a buying group and being part of an opportunity to meet yearly at a conference with just your own people and have your own conversations about the things that were specific to your industry and those learning things. So, it was always a positive experience until the day it wasn't, and that's when we got the heck out of Dodge.

Jaime Masters: See, I love hearing this. A lot of people don't talk about the pieces behind it because I've had people that have had franchises and then

decided to do their own thing, and they, of course, non-compete. They have to wait for a while and all that stuff. But they're like; "I can do it better and blah, blah, blah," because they did feel like their wings were clipped. But I love that you actually found assets within all of that too. What made you not sort of go and franchise on your own afterward?

LuAnn Nigara: Well, I guess because that's a whole other business. I mean, we were busy running the business of window treatments and awnings, so that would've literally been a different business model. And one of the things that we're very strong on and have identified very clearly as a principle of being successful in business is knowing your core mission. And our core mission was to sell window treatments and awnings. That's at the very basis. It was to provide shade and light control and privacy at the window. So, to go and launch a franchise selling window treatment business wasn't part of our core mission.

Jaime Masters: Did you ever get bored with your mission because, no offense, it's window treatments?

LuAnn Nigara: I know.

Jaime Masters: I know you're the authority, but let me just ask that. I have to.

LuAnn Nigara: Every fifth day.

Jaime Masters: Thirty-five years is a long time in window treatments.

LuAnn Nigara: Yeah, truthfully, Jaime, there is a long and a short answer to that. The short answer to that is oh, heck yeah. You know what I mean? And the long answer to that is that one of the places that I've actually come to in this trajectory of being in business this many years is that I've gone through the struggle. And when I say I, it's we. It's definitely my husband, myself, and my cousin and it's our team. But we've been through the struggle to get a business off the ground. We've been through the struggle to weather our first recession, which was the craziest, scariest thing that we've ever done.

And then, you are up and you're running, and you're kind of like all engines are firing. And then, that's when it's like, "Wait, wait. This is it forever?" And then, I totally, personally had a mid-life crisis in our business. I completely – I was like, "You are out of your mind if you think I am doing this for another 40 years. You're

absolutely crazy. I'm bored out of my mind. I don't care if they get white or off-white. I'm tired of deciding if the rod should be at 93" off the ground or 93-1/2" off the ground. Shoot me."

And my husband, he very smartly looked at me and he said, "You're looking at a staff of 20 people at this point, and you are the No. 1 driver of sales, and it's not about you. You don't get to jump ship. He goes, "We have two kids in college. We have 20 employees, and you don't get to jump ship. Get over yourself. Get back in the game."

Jaime Masters: And that worked?

LuAnn Nigara: Well, it did because what I did was – I mean, this is funny that we're going down this whole road, but I think it's sort of an empathy journey. What I did was I stepped out a little bit and did something just for me. So, at that point, I had step-children in college and high school. I had a baby that was probably 5 years old. And what I did was I've always wanted to learn French. So, I was like, "Well, then I'm learning French." And he's like, "Whatever."

Jaime Masters: "Okay, have fun with that."

LuAnn Nigara: "And I have to do it during the day because I'm not going there at night" and yadda, yadda, yadda. And the thing was, Jaime, it was funny because with just the distraction of really immersing myself into something that I was learning – That was 25 years ago. Now, 10 years ago, it was yoga. It was like, "I have to learn yoga." So, I just find that when it matters – in this case, it mattered. We had an entire staff and we had bills, and I was one of the most sales-driven numbers – you do have to figure out ways to keep your head in the game.

So, what would always happen was I would go out, do some personal development, and then all of a sudden, things would happen. And all of a sudden, I would be busier at work. And, "Oh, I can't take French anymore and I can't get to yoga this week." And I would get revitalized. And the end of the story – and this is the long answer – is that, at this point, I look back at it much the way you would look back at a 30-plus-year marriage. There are really intense moments. There are really hard moments. There are really joyous moments. But it's worth the ride, and it's worth the ride to ride it through and be grateful for what you've created.

Jaime Masters: I love – You gave me goosebumps too. I love all of this because I think what sucks is with entrepreneurs, we like change a lot and we love learning and growing. So, when you feel like you're stagnant, even if it's a good stagnant in your business, we're like what's the next thing? Where do we go? Or let me start seven more businesses. And what you're saying is you solved that same need to get over the ebbs and flows with skill-learning and creating but just in a different side of it. So, I really, really appreciate you saying that because most entrepreneurs just assume they have to sort of wipe away and throw away what they've done and then start something new or something like that.

LuAnn Nigara: Right. Well, and that goes back to sticking to your core mission, and it goes back to you have to – that business has to keep riding. I'll give you a perfect example. At one point, I said, "Well, maybe we should start to do interior design too. We should do floor plans and decorating and stuff like that." And he's just looking at me like, "No." And I'm like, "Well, maybe we should have furniture in the showroom." And he's just looking at me, "No."

And at one point, I did actually convince him to let me put a few pieces of furniture in the showroom and some accessories, so people could walk in and cash and carry. Whether they were there one year or five years, not one item was every sold because it isn't what we do. And he was just indulging me. He was just like, "All right, you crazy lady. You wanna put the [inaudible] [00:10:47]."

Jaime Masters: He's like, "See."

LuAnn Nigara: And that's exactly it. No, whereas, if he was a hard and fast partner, he probably would've just said, "No way." But because there's that part where he's my husband and he loves me, he's like, "All right. It'll make her happy. Put the stuff in the showroom." But I now know and I understood, looking back, like you said, if you're a little bored in your business, is it because it's running so well? Don't upset the apple card and screw with that. Go get a hobby for a year or two until you get excited again.

Jaime Masters: I love it. I wanna talk about you and having your husband as a business partner. I just did a whole thing in Thailand – well, not just – but did a whole thing in Thailand about this. And I've worked with tons of married couples or people in family businesses [inaudible] [00:11:34]. So, do you have any tips for people because what I loved about what you just said is you're like, so I finally convinced him to do this and he finally indulged

me? And everybody's nodding their head, yeah. Oh, yeah, that makes total sense with marriage. With business, it's so interesting because it just feels like it's so different, and yet, it's still a relationship. So, you tell me some tips or feedback or examples that you've had from weathering that storm of business and with your marriage.

LuAnn Nigara: Okay. Well, the first thing I'm gonna say is I'm not gonna kid you and say, "Oh, don't go to bed angry at each other" ever. Believe me, you're gonna go to bed angry sometimes. If you're creating an entire life with children and mortgages and a business, it's gonna happen.

Jaime Masters: We all feel better now. Thank you.

LuAnn Nigara: Exactly, exactly. This straight talk. But I would say, as much as – I guess what I'm trying to say in that is be realistic in your expectations, No. 1. And I think anybody that tells you, "Hey, it's a cake walk," crazy pants. But I will tell you that I would say – See, I don't know if this is like childbirth or not. You know how it's like when you have childbirth and you're just in the moment? It's like oh, my God. And a day later, you're like, "Well, that wasn't that bad." So, I don't know if this is like – I was about to say I would say that 98 percent of the time it was awesome. And I'm like, was this like childbirth? Really, was it 98 percent of the time?

Jaime Masters: I would be so interested – It is one of those things, right? When the pain is really, really great, thank goodness, we can – We have video of me when I had my first baby going, "One baby. Like [inaudible] [00:13:16] that we're having one." And of course, I have two, right? Of course. So, yes, that's a wonderful thing. I feel like that's the best part of our evolution to forget that piece. So, I wanna know, though, think about it. Is it 98 percent or are we going, oh, everything's sunshine and roses right now?

LuAnn Nigara: Well, you know what I would say, I will – and without kidding – truly, truly I will say that we have a very great dynamic. And don't forget, it's our cousin too, so it's three family members.

Jaime Masters: Yes.

LuAnn Nigara: And we have a very great dynamic in that – You know the e-book, right? *The E-Myth* book with Gerber, right?

Jaime Masters: Everybody mentions that. I love – Yes, yes, I definitely know that.

LuAnn Nigara: Okay. So, here's the funny thing. Now, I told you. We started our business in the early '80s, and I only became aware of this book maybe a year and a half ago. And as I'm listening to this book on tape, I'm like, "Wait a minute. We are the e-myth. We are legitimately the e-myth." So, my husband – Now, these are Michael Gerber's descriptions. He says you have the manager, who oversees the bookkeeping and the finances and the insurance and la, la, la. Then, you have the technician and then you have the entrepreneur. And I happen to disagree with the moniker entrepreneur because they're all entrepreneur. But the entrepreneur is the visionary, the one who pushes, the dreamer who looks at the big business picture and works on the business as opposed to in it.

We are very truly, by nature, those three individuals.

Jaime Masters: Really? Wait, who's who? What? So, your husband's systems, right? Is that what you said?

LuAnn Nigara: Right, so he's the manager. He's the systems. He has an MBA in accounting. He's got – I mean, he's got an accounting degree and an MBA in business, and he is the one that all things strategic with the business. Are we gonna take a lease on it? Are we gonna buy a new truck? Are we gonna hire a new employee? Are we gonna – Can we handle it from a numbers standpoint? And he's the one who oversees all of that.

And then, Billy is our lead installer. Our cousin, he's the technician. He's the one who creates art at the window. I could do everything I could do. My husband could do everything he does, but if Bill doesn't put up an amazing window treatment, nobody's calling you again.

And then, I'm the person that's always like – I remember when the Internet started, and I was saying, "We need a website." And they're like, "What do we need a website for?" I'm like, "Well, it's gonna be a big thing. We need a website." And I'm like, "We have to start doing email." And they're like, "What do we have to start doing email for?" And then, how about last year? "We need a podcast." They're like, "What's a podcast?" I'm like, "We just need one. It's the next thing. We have to do it."

Jaime Masters: That's amazing because you're always looking at the forefront. Go you. Most people don't do that.

LuAnn Nigara: Right. And so, that ties back to how our marriage works within the partnership because not that we don't ever fight to the death on something that we each really want, but we have always, from the very beginning, respected and understood, without Michael Gerber writing a book and telling us, that we each have our – what's the buzzword now – our zone of genius. Right? This is the word we all hear now. But we just instinctively understood that we each had certain areas of the business that we were better at than the other partner. All of us have our strengths and are good at a lot of things.

When we would have a disagreement, it was just understood that the partners whose domain that was has the final say. So, you could fight to the death. You could bring your case day after day, and I could walk through the door and say, "I still don't want to." Or he could still... But ultimately, when that – And we never said, "You're in charge of this. You're in charge of this." We just organically respected each other's domain. And now, it has become that.

Jaime Masters: So, it wasn't as though you had the org chart and you were like, "I'm gonna do these types of roles." It was like the strengths sort of came and evolved from what you were doing?

LuAnn Nigara: Yeah. And you just sort of looked at your other person there, and you just said, "You know, you're really good at that. So, why would I second-guess you on that?" So, I think now, yourself as a business coach and I talk to a lot of young entrepreneurs as well. I say have that conversation if you have partners. We were very lucky that we all really had very, very different skill sets. It wouldn't have worked out for us organically if two or three had the same skill set.

Jaime Masters: That's what I was gonna ask you, though, because if you're married, you can't be like, "Oh, thank goodness my husband is a this." You don't know what they are, so what if it doesn't work? What if it's not that synergistic? Do you think people should get into business together?

LuAnn Nigara: Well, then I don't know if they shouldn't. I mean, I think anybody who has a desire to and has a good product and has a good foundation for what the idea and the concept and everything is, I think they should go for it. But I do think, in that case, you do have to have very clear discovery sessions even if it's just the two of you at the kitchen table. I understand that we're both really good at

finances, but who is just one little bit more adept or who has that really great skill at finance plus can sort of project – Or how about the one that's better at finances who's more interested in keeping up with world events as they related to finances? You could both be good at numbers, and one of you can't care what's happening in the trends and the recessions that might be coming or going.

To me, it's about facing it with eyes wide open and making agreements because, look, we have skills that overlap. My husband is also an excellent salesperson, so it's not like, oh, I'm like this and he's like this. We're sort of like this, but there are just certain things that, at the end of the day, you've gotta go, "Okay, that's your domain. You're better even if you're just one inch better."

Jaime Masters: See, that's perfect though, that you're both really good salespeople because that's amazing for a business. Then, for everything, this just worked out perfectly for you guys.

LuAnn Nigara: It did work out.

Jaime Masters: Man, everyone's like this is annoying. No. So, let's break it down into a little more detail too because I get this question, and I feel like there are so many nuances. So, I want your feedback or stories or whatever you've got on this because when do you put the line between when you talk about business and when you talk about personal? Like at the dinner table, are you allowed to bring up business stuff? Tell me more about how this goes.

LuAnn Nigara: Try not to. That's all I would say is try not to. I mean, honestly, Jaime, I don't know. I mean, I would say it's always open for discussion. I don't think that we've ever said we'll only talk about it during 9:00 to 9:00 and not after 9:00 p.m. But I think, for us, we both really love our business. We really love the people that work for us. We love each other. We love our partner. We love our clients.

We enjoy it, and I would say there have been moments where I know, me particularly, where I have just said, "I really just need a moment not to talk about this." But I would say maybe I've said that five times in 30-plus years where I just went, "I'm up to here. I have too much on my plate right now, and I know that I can't accomplish it. So, right now, I need to just pretend that it's not real."

Jaime Masters: I know that feeling, yes. But it's the awareness.

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- LuAnn Nigara: [Inaudible] [00:20:39] and change the subject.
- Jaime Masters: Seriously, I think everybody can identify with that. Like, “And I’m done. Nope, I’m done. Done, done, done.”
- LuAnn Nigara: Right. Fortunately, halfway into that wine, I’d be like, “All right, now I can talk. Now, what do you wanna tell me?”
- Jaime Masters: So, that’s the funny thing, what you’re bringing up over and over are these ebbs and flows. So, us really paying attention to the fact that there are ebbs and flows, both in marriages and in businesses and in days, like [inaudible] and riding the waves. So, how do you do that, especially – Do you do a lot of self-care stuff? And I know we’re talking about what we totally not said we were gonna talk about, but I find this so interesting. Are you one of those type of people that work really, really hard during the day and really try and give yourself the self-care that people need? Especially as a mom, it’s really tough.
- LuAnn Nigara: I would say I was much better at it when I was a mom with children in the house.
- Jaime Masters: Really? You were better at it?
- LuAnn Nigara: Yeah, yeah.
- Jaime Masters: Don’t tell me that. No.
- LuAnn Nigara: Why? Well, because what I would do is I would multitask it. In other words, when you have small children in the house, and maybe not younger than 8 because your kids are probably not at the age where they’re at a lot of activities – but from 8 until they drive, at least my kid was gymnastics and piano and yadda, yadda. And what I – and CCD. I literally, every single time she was at an activity, then I did an activity.
- So, if it was a piano lesson, then I had to walk around the block as many times as it took for her to get out of piano. If it was the gymnastics session that was gonna go an hour and 20 minutes, okay, I dropped you off. I go to the gym. And that could be at 3:00 in the afternoon because what would happen for me is I could sit at my desk for an hour and 15 minutes and know I could get up on time to pick her up, but I couldn’t take a client-facing appointment and know that I could get up and leave in that time frame. So, it
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became, well, I know I can go to the gym and leave in that time frame. Let me do that. You know what I mean?

So, I mean, one time, she was in high school, and we had set up – my youngest daughter was a softball pitcher, and she played at college and everything. And at one point, she was involved in strength training and agility training, and it was twice a week. And I said – When I went to the place and I was interviewing which gym to take her to this at because it's high-level training and all that stuff at that point – and finally, they knew it was between them and another place. And they were offering a tai chi class on the same nights, but it was only to kids. And I said, look, here's the deal. I'll put her in the training here if I can take the tai chi class the two nights a week at no charge.

Jaime Masters: Sold. You are a negotiator.

LuAnn Nigara: So, now, it's harder because now it's harder to stop for me because now when I would be at my desk and the pile would be to here, and she had to be picked up from basketball practice at 6:00, okay. You might show up at 10 after 6:00 and she's the only kid standing there with the coach under the streetlight. But you don't show up at 7:30. So, now, it's like, oh, there's a yoga class at 6:00. Oh, it's five to 6:00. It's 6:00. Well, five after. I guess I missed it. I'll work another three hours. I guess I'll go home at midnight tonight. So, it's harder now, Jaime, actually.

Jaime Masters: Why is that? Okay, so let's talk about that because I didn't quit my job until I got pregnant because it was a catalyst. I don't – and when the kids have to be picked up from school, you pick them up. And yet, the weeks that I don't have the kiddos, I'm like, I'm just gonna – we're so horrible at this for ourselves. How can we make it better? What has worked for you on that side because everybody knows it's hard, but I'm sure you've solved a few of it?

LuAnn Nigara: Well, what it is is – For me, what had happened – Look, I don't have a magic pill. I'm honest with you. You really do have to make the decision, yes.

Jaime Masters: Darn it. That's why I had you on.

LuAnn Nigara: Oh, sorry. False advertising. It really just – it's just like everything else. It comes down to a choice, and there are, just like we talked about ebbs and flows, there are weeks and months that I'm better at that's it. Yoga's at 6:00. I'm leaving or I'm not taking any

appointments until 9:30 because I'm gonna go for a run in the morning, and then I have to shower. I mean, I have to say my husband is so lucky because, A.) he's bald, and B.) he's a guy. So, he just puts his exercise in at 11:00 in the morning, goes, does a good 40-minute workout, takes a 10-minute shower, and he's back to work. And I'm like I gotta dry my hair. I gotta do my makeup. I can't do it in the middle of the day.

But it is, Jaime, it's just – What I find for me is I'm mostly in balance, and I don't really mean that the hours are balanced. That's just a term I use for my inner world, my brain inside. And I can be guilty of all work and not enough play. What'll happen, though, is there'll be a moment where my person, my body, my inner voice will just really start to be like, “Okay, crazy lady, this can't continue. You're no good to anybody.” Mostly what I notice is I will have a loss of patience for a task that really should've been no big deal, and then I'll go, oh, okay. When's the last time you went for a run? And I'll be like, yeah, that's a little too long.

Jaime Masters:

Okay, I love you saying this because I feel like, especially females – And I've been chatting with my guy clients on this, and I'm like, “All right, let's talk about feelings. This is gonna be fun.” And they're like, “Oh, gosh, Jaime.” And I was like, “No, no, logical. It's gonna be logical. I promise.” But you said your inner knowing or inner voice or whatever that was, and what's funny is – I've been working on this for a long time. Like, “What do I actually want?” How does it show up because what you just said is, oh, the loss of patience? How did you start fine tuning and really paying attention to what was the actual issue instead of you just losing your patience more often?

LuAnn Nigara:

Well, because I just – Look, I don't know. Maybe it comes with age. It comes with years. I know that, by nature, I'm a roll-with-the-punches person. I don't get rattled. It's like things happen every day. I tell my employees every day, “If you think that you're not gonna make a mistake today at work, just stay home. If you're waiting for me not to make a mistake, then don't look because...” So, I know that each one of us in our team, somebody is gonna have a mistake today. They're gonna forget to do something. They're going to do something wrong, and that does not rattle me. It's expected and roll with it and get up and go on.

So, when a small, little thing is I'm just like – I mean, I will crazy pants. I'll literally find myself scream out loud, and I'll be like, “Okay, you're off your rocker.” Not at a person, but it's usually

like I'm getting in the car, and instead of making three trips, I have to carry everything in one trip because I'm so hurried, I'm so late, and I've got 20 things to do. Then, everything drops. And instead of just being like, "Oh, I dropped everything," I'll be like, "[Yelling] dropped everything." And I'm like, "Okay, you're on the dark side. Reel it back in."

Jaime Masters: Noted, noted. So, how do you get back on the light side? Tell me what works for you.

LuAnn Nigara: No, those are – Thankfully, that's a once a year, twice a year type of a thing to that level where I'm standing in a parking lot screaming like a lunatic at nobody other than myself. But then, what I find is that if I just take a look at my day, my week, I've not done all the things that I know I need to do. I'm not intentional with my schedule. I'm not intentional with the tasks. I'm not organized in my tasks. I have let the busyness push away the parameters of productivity. And it doesn't serve me. It doesn't serve my employees. It doesn't serve my customers. It serves nobody.

Jaime Masters: Okay. So, let's talk about this a little bit more because I feel like I've been doing this lately. So, I'm like, oh, tell me more about how this goes because you can't get it all done. There are so many things in business. You've been in business for 35 years and wait, you still have more on your to-do list. There's always more.

LuAnn Nigara: I've never left with it all done in one day, ever.

Jaime Masters: And that's the – I don't think it's possible. I mean, maybe I live in a different reality, but because there's always going to be new things that we can do because we're awesome, amazing people that can always do more. So, we can't feel bad about it not getting done, No. 1, right?

LuAnn Nigara: No, no.

Jaime Masters: But then, how do we mitigate that to leave without things being done because I also love having things checked off lists?

LuAnn Nigara: I know, I know.

Jaime Masters: And especially, I do so many of these interviews, and I'm like, "Oh, I should do that. I should do that. I don't know. I can't do any of it right now." Right?

LuAnn Nigara: I know.

Jaime Masters: How do you deal with all of that? Please give me advice.

LuAnn Nigara: I mean, I'm gonna go to some of the language that I've heard over the interviews of my podcast and, of course, all the great books that we read. And the thing is these concepts are put out by entrepreneur after entrepreneur because they are true. It's the Big Rock Theory, move the big rock. Or I had one woman on my show, Marianne Cherico, and she actually said the sentence, "What would the CEO do?" And I went, "Oh, I like that," because it's sort of like there are times where I am knee deep, and I'm like, oh, my God, there are ten people here that could do this, and there's only two of here that could do this thing. What am I doing with this?

So, I just feel like, look, we're sort of lighthearted here in doing all this stuff, but a well-run business is rooted in its systems. There's no question, and I just don't think that there is any magic pill. And the reality of the magic pill is the decision to run your business in the parameters of its system. When you're haywire, it's because you're haywire.

You know what it is? It's like, to me, this is what I said. How many times have you met somebody that is, "I'm on a diet, I'm on a diet, I'm on a diet. I'm trying to lose 20 pounds and I can't lose 20 pounds." And you're just like, "Come on, sweetie. You can lose 20 pounds." You're not you. You can't lose 20 pounds and have a Snickers bar. That's why you can't lose 20 pounds, right?

Jaime Masters: Wait, is that why? No, I'm kidding.

LuAnn Nigara: Right. And I, oh, my God. I'm not making light of anybody's genuine struggle with weight loss. I'm talking about the person that's really full of nonsense, that really is not actually doing any of the systems to lose weight. So, it's the same with a business. If you're scattered, I'm not saying, as a 30-plus-year veteran of business, that I've never experienced scatter, but I know darn well when I do because I am scattered. I'm not employing what I know to be the way to do it. So, people listen to podcasts. They read books. They want a magic answer, and the answer is set up the foundation, put the processes in place, and run them. That's it.

Jaime Masters: Everyone's like, "That's so unsexy. Darn it."

LuAnn Nigara: And it's really not easy.

Jaime Masters: Man, I wanted a pill. So, I keep going back to – and everybody knows because the past few interviews, I'm like, "I just want robots, and then the robots will do the systems." And then, I can just be on my merry way.

LuAnn Nigara: Put me on the list for those robots too.

Jaime Masters: **[Inaudible] [00:32:29]**. That's my next company, seriously. But it is one of those things where what's difficult about knowing that you have to do systems is feeling scattered. Knowing you have to do systems and going, "Oh, that's even more on my plate. Oh, awesome."

LuAnn Nigara: That's true. That's true. No, it's true. And in that case, you're exactly right, Jaime. I agree with you 100 percent. In that case, the thing is to start with something because you know what it is? I'll use the same analogy as the weight loss because when you start with one something and you master it and you feel good and you see the result of it, then it's like, "Ooh, let me start with another something." And it's the same thing. It's like if you don't really get serious about your food intake, your exercise output for three weeks and then, you finally get real and you look in the mirror and that one first week that you do it and you know you did it and, all of a sudden, you lost two pounds, you're like, "Ooh, I could do that next week."

So, it's the same thing. It's very overwhelming if you have no systems to listen to great coaches like yourself that teach people how to put systems in. it's sort of like it's too much. So, pick one thing and make a system for the intake of your new clients, just one system. And then, watch it work and you get excited about it. You're like, "Whoo, that was awesome. And now I want another one. Okay, let's have another one."

Jaime Masters: That's amazing because that feeling of being on top of something, like oh, I did that, ooh, I'm proud of myself, that creates the momentum, which makes you feel so much better. No, it's funny because this happens to my clients. It happens to me too where I'm like, I'm scattered, so I'm just gonna not look at it. Like, I'm just gonna go over here and be on Facebook or whatever. You know what I mean? So, while I know what the logical thing is, it's sometimes easier to not, but I know what works. So, what do you do to try and get yourself over that hump, that motivation hump of,

yeah, I don't wanna look at it, versus I'm gonna take on one thing and feel that feeling of let's go get this one small thing?

LuAnn Nigara: Well, I'm the sort of person that – I'm very much a realist, so what I will do is I will have what I call the big girl panties conversation with myself. I'll be like, "All right. You're overwhelmed right now. You have 15 things to do. There's about a minute and a half left of this day, and tomorrow's gonna start like **[inaudible]** **[00:34:53]** gangbusters because it's gonna come with its own list, and you still have today's list."

So, for me, I literally go to – instead of that moment of overwhelm and that moment of the pile, I go to, well, what are your options. You could put your head in the sand and you could not do this because is it not gonna be there in an hour or two hours?

So, I go to the result. How will you feel – whatever it is – if it's a task that I can get done in a half hour, an hour, or it's a task that takes a week, how will I feel in one hour if I've done this? How will I feel? And I'm actually talking about times when it feels hard to push through because you're exhausted. You're really tired. You've already done an 11-hour day, and you have this one last proposal that you really promised somebody would go out today.

And I have sat there, literally, exhausted at 10:30 at night and went, "Well, I could blow this off, and what will I feel like tomorrow? Or I could accomplish this, and what will I feel like tomorrow?" But mostly, I'm gonna say, "I'm gonna be tired tomorrow either way, so I may as well be tired and accomplished."

Jaime Masters: I love that you have this talk in your head. Right?

LuAnn Nigara: Okay, we could this, we could that. And look, again, I – I interview a lot of business people on my show too, and I don't mean... I feel like a lot of people come on very polished. I listen to a lot of podcasts, very polished. This is how you do it. This is what you do. It's all easy, and if you do it, it'll work. And I respect that because, as a podcaster, I want people to come with a straight line. And as a podcast listener, I wanna get on and get a straight line. But there is this whole other side of it that isn't so pretty and-

Jaime Masters: -Thank you, thank you.

LuAnn Nigara: And that doesn't mean that when we don't have the pretty moments that we're not good business people and that we're not

doing the right things. It just means that it isn't all just, hey, open the rule book and do it. Eventually, though, you have to do that. You have to open the rule book and do it.

Jaime Masters: See, I so appreciate somebody that's been in business for 35 years and with their husband, by the way, that can tell us how it is because it is a little bit too much polish. Now, I work with clients, and when I work with clients, they tell me all of the crap, so I know what it really is for six-and-some-figure business owners. And nobody wants to share that stuff, and they all think they're crazy. And I'm like, "No, no, no. Everybody's crazy."

LuAnn Nigara: Right, that's right, right. It's sort of like – You know what it's like? It's like when you watch the Oscar's, the red carpet, and you're watching all those women and this and that and the other thing. And then, you watch a show that's like they've got their boobs taped, and they've got their head taped up. And it's like, "What? They've got 19,000 things?" It's like it isn't just the good. All of it is good, but all of the good isn't easy or terrific or glamorous or something. I don't know. You know what I mean?

Jaime Masters: Yes, yes, thank you because we need to hear that, especially moms, especially women in business, too, trying to juggle all of the things and be perfect at all of it because that's what we do, right?

LuAnn Nigara: That's the goal.

Jaime Masters: Yay, look at me. I'm perfect. Oh, I'm not? What? But having the permission to hear from somebody who is successful, who loves their life, really important for us to go, "Oh, you can still love your life and have crazy moments? Great, I'm not alone in the craziness." Okay, I know we have to start wrapping up, and I know this totally went a totally different direction than we planned on, but I love that.

LuAnn Nigara: We exactly planned not to go this direction. We're so good.

Jaime Masters: I know. I love this. I'm like, let's go. All right, perfect. I love you ride the wave with me. You're totally go-with-the-flow. I have to ask the same last question I always do, so it's what's one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward toward their goal of a million?

LuAnn Nigara: Wow. All right, so I have to say that, keeping in the theme of our

discussion here and instead of – Look, on a very practical level, I would say definitely identify your core mission. I would definitely do that, so from a practical level, you have to identify your core mission. You have to know why you're in business and what your objective is. Then, you have to establish your systems, and you have to execute them. And then, you have to decide to do them. So, those are the three things I really think you have to do.

But based on our conversation, what I would say is that if you could, this week, whether you're in business one year or three years or five years, if you could – if you love your business – I'm gonna make an assumption that you love your business. If you could just give yourself the gift of picturing yourself in 35 years and picturing where I sit now... It's like the childbirth. I guess it was hard all along the way, but at this point, I just remember all the joys and all the successes. And that doesn't mean I won't hang up this podcast with you and something will blow up.

But you do get to a point where if you're running it well and you have a healthy respect for the people that are involved with you and your clients and yourself, you get to the point where you come to gratitude for what you've created and awareness of what you've created. And if you're not sure of that, do a pretend. Do an act-as-if. Do a moment where you picture yourself there 30 years down the road, and say, "That's gonna be my reward for digging right back in now when I really am tired and my kids are crying and my husband wants dinner on the table or my wife didn't make dinner for me." But take a moment to visualize that exercise and hang onto it and work hard to get back in there.

Jaime Masters: I'm gonna do this tomorrow during my meditation. I usually do one year, five years. I haven't done a 30-year. You forget. Time's gonna pass either way. I so appreciate you saying that, so I'm gonna change that up because a lot changes in 30 years.

LuAnn Nigara: That's right.

Jaime Masters: 35, you've been in business as long as I have been alive.

LuAnn Nigara: I know.

Jaime Masters: You look amazing.

LuAnn Nigara: Smoke and mirrors.

Jaime Masters: That's right. Whatever's working, totally – I don't care if it's pins or whatever. Like you said, I wanna look like you. That being said, you're amazing. Thank you so much for coming on. Can you tell us where – I know you have a book coming out soon. Tell us where we can find you more online or your podcast so that way everyone can subscribe.

LuAnn Nigara: Yeah, the podcast is *A Well-Designed Business* podcast, and it is geared toward the interior design industry which is my wheelhouse, but I always say to outside entrepreneurs, substitute the word interior design for brick-layer. We talk about business. We talk about how to run a good business and how to do systems and so forth like that. So, right now, that podcast is living on the Window Works website, so it's www.windowworks-nj.com/podcast. And of course, Window Works itself for window treatments, anybody that's in the New York Metro area, we're happy to help you with window treatments or awnings.

And then, the book is called *The Making of a Well-Designed Business*, and it basically is a combination of that, okay, page 1, how to open a business and the reminiscing and the homage to having the experience of building this terrific business with my husband and our cousin.

Jaime Masters: Aw, I can't wait until it comes out. And of course, if anyone is in your area, you're the window authority, so everybody should go check you out. I'm sure they wanna call you up anyway. Thank you so much for coming on the show today. I really, really, really appreciate it.

LuAnn Nigara: I enjoyed it so much, Jaime. Thank you.

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Duration: 43 minutes