

Episode 7. From Employee to Go-To Gal in Under ONE Year with Nicole Saunders

INTRO:

Welcome to Go-to-Gal Episode #7. Today we're doing things a little bit differently. So I love doing on-air coaching calls because I think it just gives you that peak behind the curtain. You can really hear someone else maybe asking a question that you wish you could ask. The ins and outs of their business, and how I would give advice to them. A little bit different, obviously, on on-air coaching calls than on a regular coaching call. But you get a good taste for it. You really do. But I still want and will continue to do those. But today's episode is a little bit of a twist on it. So Nicole Saunders is joining us. Nicole is the Go-to-Gal for Pinterest. And we have been working together in a variety of different ways since August of 2018. And we thought about doing an on-air coaching call but we ended up deciding to do almost like an on-air case study. I'm sure you see these testimonials or shout-outs or people having all this success online, and Nicole is totally one of those people. She has more than doubled her business, like more than doubled, since August. In fact, even before I started recording this intro, she just Voxered me that she just had her best month ever! Which is crazy because she's had several of her best months ever since we've been working together in a variety of different ways.

So she is amazing and like a firecracker. And I'm glad that we're taking you behind the scenes today because this is her journey. Last year this time, she was still in a full-time job. She has done a massive amount of success in the last year. I'm blown away by her and I'm so excited to share her with you. And not just the highlights reel. That's not what we're about here. So this is a little bit of a different format. I would love your feedback on it. So please pop on to Instagram after you listen to this. Either comment on our post on the go.to.gal account or send me a DM. And let me know if there are any other questions that you want to ask her. I got the hookup here with Nicole if you have some follow-up questions, I'm sure she'd be happy to answer. But I'd love to know your feedback on do you like this kind of format? Should we do more of this? So today we're going behind the scenes. We're talking about her journey. And not just big milestones of success but also the things that she has struggled with along the way. Mindset hurdles. All the things. So excited to share this with you.

So who is Nicole Saunders? Nicole Saunders is a Pinterest and marketing strategist. She is founder and CEO of Saunders Says and mom of Instagram dogs that are Instagram-famous. Yes, her dogs Instagram-famous. And she lives with her hubby and Instagram-famous dogs outside of Charlotte. So let's bring her on. I'm so excited for you to

hear all about the amazing things that she's doing. The big leap she's taking. I know this is gonna inspire you so so much. And if you're listening to this and you're like alright Jaclyn, I'm curious, what is it like to work with you. There's a couple different ways to work with me; one-on-one or in a group session. And you know what? I've been holding out on you a little bit. First thing's first. I have a whole resource library that is free! I have a place where all of my free resources are. And you can go there and get them. If you go to jaclynmellone.com/goodies, it's my Member Vault account. I'm kind of obsessed with Member Vault and there's a lot more on that to come, so stay tuned for that. But this is my Member Vault account and the cool thing about it is that you're gonna see there's a place for my free goodies. And if you don't already have a log in, if you're not already on my email list or whatnot, or if you are but you don't know it, you can create an account really easily there. Just put in your first name and email. And that will give you access to all my free goodies. There is a mindset exercise in there that you absolutely must take. I have all of my clients go through this. I'm not gonna lie, it's uncomfortable. It's not easy. But if you do it, if you do the work, it is gonna shed so much light that's going in in your head, and the things that you need to work through in order to grow as a person as a business – oh, so good. But I also have strategy things in there. Basically, go to jaclynmellone.com/goodies. Click on that free goodies part and you'll be able to get access to all of those things. And then you'll also see my other offers there. The cool thing about Member Vault is your free and paid offers all live in the same place. So if you have been thinking about working together, either one-on-one or in a group setting, you'll be able to see how we can do that there. So go check it out. Go to jaclynmellone.com/goodies. And without further ado, let's bring Nicole on.

PODCAST PROPER

JACLYN: Nicole! I'm so excited to have you here today. You are our first case study episode ever.

NICOLE: I'm excited! Thanks for having me, Jaclyn.

JACLYN: Alright, today we're going to talk about all of the success that you've had and how all of that has happened. But first, let's go back in time. I want to go back in time to when you were a little girl or when you were just starting out in the working world. What did you used to be the go-to-gal for?

NICOEL: I think I've always been the go-to-gal for artsy things. So even when I was or something, my mom found me drawing on the wall with cheese.

So yes, not even kidding. And then I would draw tattoos on my sister with Crayola's. Markers, I'm sure. Probably not Sharpies; might have been, I don't know.

JACLYN: Definitely not Sharpie's [laughter].

NICOLE: And my mom would find me in my bedroom coloring in coloring books and obsessed with that kind of stuff. I won my first art show in kindergarten, so you know, I got first place with my egg shell art.

JACLYN: Humble brag [laughter]. Starting off the awards in kindergarten. I love it.

NICOLE: So I've always been the artsy person. Actually when I went to college, I thought I was going to be an art teacher. But I realized art is very hard at a liberal arts institution, has a very strong arts program. It was very tough. So I kind of changed some courses there. Always had my art in everything that I do. Even with [2:02]. So my Background, I used to work at [2:05] until I launched my business last year. But I still love doing creative arts and all that fun stuff.

JACLYN: I love it. So now, when did you leave your job last year?

NICOLE: So my last day working for someone else was March 2, 2018.

JACLYN: Oh my goodness, it's just coming up! You're gonna have to celebrate. Now how long had you been side-hustling before you left your job?

NICOLE: I've always been kind of a side hustler. I've dabbled in direct sales and some other things. And I fell into blogging and picked up into Pinterest and Tailwind. So November 2017, I had my first paying client for graphics. And then ended up in January, had another... my second client ever who I was kind of doing random stuff. I was doing branding and Pinterest and just random stuff. I had no focus. I was all over the place. I just took that crazy leap of faith and then here I am. And I'm not that kind of person. I am not a leap of faith and grow wings on the way down person before this. Had you asked e=me five years ago if I would be doing this – no.

JACLYN: So what changed?

NICOLE: Oh man. So my job; I used to love going to work. And I finally feel that way again. I love working. And I've always been a person who likes to do stuff. I'm a doer. And so I loved working. I used to love what I did. Things changed. I'm nationally with [4:08], specifically at my institution. And things continue to just keep changing. And one day I told my husband,

"Something's gotta change majorly, or something's gonna happen". So I ended up and started working for this startup. And I knew it was startup. It was going to be a consulting job. So I knew there wasn't a lot of people there. I asked her one day. Oh, and this was overlapped at my other job. It was a really good setup at that point. I asked how many clients does she have, and she's like I have one client. I was like, "I have one client!" I didn't say that out loud but I came home one day and I told my husband. I said I think I can work for myself. This lady has one client and she's doing it. I can do this. And he was like do it. So that was kind of the thing and I did it.

JACLYN: You just kind of needed that veil lifted. Like oh, I don't need to have a zillion clients. For me it was like I don't need hundreds of thousands of dollars in startup or a brick and mortar to be able to do it. We think it can only be done one way.

NICOLE: Yeah. I literally invested in a course. There was a three-payment program for a \$9,000 course. And that was all I invested in to not be...

JACLYN: Wait, no it wasn't a \$900,000 course... [laughter].

NICOLE: No, I \$900 or a \$1,000 course. Somewhere between. No, I don't have \$900,000 to invest in a course.

JACLYN: This is a very high tech course [laughter]. Okay, \$900 or a \$1,000. And a three-payment plan course. It was probably scary! You probably have never been anything like that for a course before. But you took the leap of faith and you're like alright, I got the payment plan to make this work. And it was a year ago this week that that course came out. And I said oh I need three, no, four beta clients so I could make the payment for the first part or payment of the course. And so I had four beta clients, and the rest was as they say, history.

JACLYN: So the rest is history. Alright. Amazing! Well, I did not have the opportunity to meet you until the summer of '18, and gosh you have grown immensely since then. You are on freakin' fire and I'm so excited to dive into all this. So we met back in August. We did a half day intensive with Jessica Stansberry. People talk about 1-on-1, that's 2-on-1.

NICOLE: Oh yeah, that was fun.

JACLYN: But it was a really pivotal moment for sure, for sure. Where were you with your business take us back to August 2018 – what did things look like?

NICOLE: Yeah so basically, and I'll go even little bit further back from that. So from January until I met with ya'll, I was all over the place as I have mentioned. I was just doing some Pinterest stuff. I was doing ghostwriting. I was doing VA general stuff, branding. Whatever. I was hustling.

JACLYN: Were you still doing direct sales stuff, too?

NICOLE: Yeah.

JACLYN: When did you stop that?

NICOLE: Well, it kinda just fell off about April, and unofficially, and officially-officially left all of that. So that's all gone. So I met y'all in August. We had our half-day intensive. So May, I was like man, I'm doing amazing. I'm rich. I'm making all this money. And then in June, my whole world fell apart. One of my clients at that point were in direct sales, and direct sales is an industry that's seasonal. It's very seasonal-based. And their clients aren't purchasing because they don't have money to spend. So at that summer, I just wanted to go on vacations, do whatever and not really purchasing products from my clients. So everybody was like... most everybody was like I need to take a break. And I was like oh my gosh, what am I going to do? Right before I met y'all, I was like I think I might have to go get another job; I don't know why. The thing came out that y'all are come into my area, and I was like "Five hundred dollar, and I can pay two payments." I'm a payment person. I love payments that explains stuff up. I had \$250, I can do this right now. So I was like "I'm signing up". Then we met in August and y'all really helped me get a focus. When I came in, I was like yeah I'm a Pinterest strategist and I'm a branding strategist. And you're like haha, no you're not [laughter]. I remember y'all looked at each other, and Jessica goes "Should I tell her or do you want and tell her?"

JACLYN: Sometimes , Jessica and I have this ability to just read each other's minds. And so we both knew it was like alright, we're gonna let you down gently but we're gonna keep it real with you. Because that's what we all need, right ? People to be real with us.

NICOLE: And that's what I appreciate. You all know some tough love. And you know, I come in, give you a hug and then be like okay, stop this.

JACLYN: [laughter] That whole thing you're excited about? We're gonna get rid of all that. But you were doing a lot. You were making money in a lot of different ways. For us it was so clear that you could be the go-to-gal for Pinterest. That was such a no brainer, which is why we were smirking across the table, like who's gonna tell her?

NICOLE: But you did give me the option. Which one do you want to do? With [10:21] I was raised in everything. I saw this, and I was like...

JACLYN: "Am I gonna make the right decision?"

NICOLE: I just needed to rip the band aid off that "Yeah, you're not doing two things".

JACLYN: And here's the thing. **If you were really passionate about one of the other areas, you could have grown any of them right? But we can't grow multiple different businesses at the same time and hit those big goals and niching down, which is freaking scary. But when you're brave enough to do it and take action like you did, it pays off.**

NICOLE: Ever since having that day with y'all I've really been able to be that to go-to- gal for Pinterest. When people think of Pinterest. Or when they think of me, they think of Pinterest. So it really helped me become more visible in the Pinterest arena and it helped me become more visible in the Pinterest arena. And it helped me fill myself. When you walk up to somebody, you're like oh what do you do? And I'm like I do twenty different things, and then I pull up my list like Santa Clause. So now it's very clear. I know exactly what I do and I can be blunt, I guess, for a lack of a better word with people when they ask what I do. So it's been great.

JACLYN: Absolutely. So we first met in August, but we quickly became friends. You joined our Lady Biz Accelerator.

NICOLE: Did you just say that I'm a friend? We have to document this on the podcast. Everybody knows that we're friends [laughter].

JACLYN: We're friends! Totally friends. So we met in August. We quickly hit it off. And then you did Best Month Ever. You joined the Lady Biz Accelerator. You joined Go-to-Gal. You were all-in. I love it.

NICOLE: Yes. I am a Jaclyn and Jessica super fan.

JACLYNL But **what I love though is that you also implement like crazy. You're not just joining all these things and consuming all the content. You are taking strategic action and making moves.**

NICOLE: And I think that's the thing that's key for me. And I know I joked about us being friends, but at the same point it's like I get to kind of tap into you and your brain. And Best Month Ever - I mean, I was thinking about that yesterday. I said that was the best month ever! It was so fun. Just the excitement and the momentum that I was able to gain from that and

really propel my business forward and then the relationships from the other people who participated in that group. I'm still connecting with those ladies today. And I'm so thankful for that. So I think for me, these programs where I could really... and **especially as an introvert. I can get to know people more one on one instead of like a course where it's like oh here's this work - you go and do it. And you don't know who that person is that created the course or the person behind it.** And that's why **I love the Lady Biz Accelerator. It truly is hands-on.** And we get to see each other through Zoom or in person like in New York or whatever. It's not just oh hey we're here for the Mastermind, we'll sit here and listened to y'all talk. You were actually giving real world advice that then we'd have to do the work. We have to take it and implement it. That's on us. But I've always been the kind of person that's like if you're going to give me something to do, I know you're going to ask me about it. So I have to come back and be like yes, I did all this.

JACLYN: Yes, the accountability goes the a long way. I've just been blown away of how supportive the ladies in the group are of each other. That just blows me away. I love how you have a new program out. We have to talk about what your business looks like right now. You have a new program out and you've been getting referrals from other people in the program. I loved seeing all of that.

NICOLE: Yes, we're a really close group, I think. I imagine we'll stay in touch even after the actual program ends, which is exciting. But my program is called *Pinterest Pro*. And really, Jaclyn massaged this idea into me for months, y'all. I didn't know. I was very resistant to it.

JACLYN: [laughter] We're like gardening. We're planting seeds, watering some ideas. Before you tell us about Pinterest Pro, why don't we talk about your current business model? And that way, everyone can see too why I mas massaging this idea. So how do you make money, Nicole?

NICOLE: It's funny because people who don't know anything about entrepreneurship; like my best friend she asked me the other day, "how do you get paid?" So really **what I do, the bread and butter of my business, is my monthly management clients. I manage their Pinterest/ Overall, their whole strategy of their presence on Pinterest. Growing traffic from Pinterest to their website.** So if they are a blogger and they wanna start being a part of **[15:49]**, they know that they need 25,000 viewers to their website monthly. So I help them grow their business through getting traffic there. Once the traffic gets there, a lot of that is on them. So if they know that they're selling products as an eCommerce business; or they are sharing a sponsored content through a blog posts that they have a brand partnership with; my goal is to build their

business and help them succeed through getting that traffic there. And every day I'm so grateful that I get to do that and help. And currently all of my clients are women. To help these women grow their business – it's just unreal. I love that I get to see them grow.

JACLYN: How many hours a day are you working?

NICOLE: To be honest? I've never actually tracked it, but I probably should. I've been actually thinking about doing that recently. And I've been working a lot more in the past couple of weeks because I'm prepping for this program and getting content for that. But I would say – and I'm an office of one and a business of one right now; and I currently have 16 clients. So maybe 2 hours a day just on client work, maybe? I need to track it. But I also spend time being visible like you and Jessica taught me. Creating these blog posts so people know that I'm the expert. And so I'm sharing, creating content, doing that invisible visibility strategy that you taught me that works so well. Trying to connect and build relationships with through social media. Like this afternoon, I have a couple of virtual coffee chats with people. And I do coffee chats with everybody, even other Pinterest managers. I want to really celebrate that community over competition. And just get to know them as a person. I don't see them as oh that's another Pinterest person. I don't see them as competition or a resource or somebody that I can go to if something going wrong or somebody to celebrate with. So the whole Pinterest community is really like that I just love it. 18:11

JACLYN: Oh, I love this so much.. Do you remember how many clients you had back in the summer?

NICOLE: Oh, I didn't i have that many. I think it might have had 8-ish?

JACLYN: I was thinking eight, too. So it's like double. And you've raised your rates, too?

NICOLE: Yeah, I just raised my rates in January 1 wine and I actually struggled a little bit with that, too. And as far as my past clients, I still have two of my beta clients with me. So I struggled with oh, should I raise rates on these clients we've built this in? But then I was like **I'm giving them a lot. I'm helping them grow so much. This is long term gains. Even if we stopped working together today, five years down the road Pinterest is still going to be sending them traffic and growing their business. And what I do is valuable and worth it.** Before I met you all I would've been like I'm not raising rates, let me give a discount [laughter]. I need more clients, let me discount everything.

JACLYN: [laughter] Oh, so amazing. So now there's so many things I wanna come back to. So now you've built up this client's side of the business. And as you say I've been massaging this into you. But we've been thinking about having a one-to-many model for you. Not that you want to leave your clients, but you're freaking amazing at what you do. And people are already like "how do I do that?" So there was a natural segue there. Plus, you also don't have capacity for more clients now. So you need people that can help you. That is needed thing so you can continue growing. So tell us about Pinterest Pro.

NICOLE: So interests Pro, after Jaclyn had massaged this idea into me for a while in the Lady Biz Accelerator. We're working on our one-to-many models. And finally one day... because I didn't want to compete with my mentor. Like I said, i respect her and the community, not a competition. I even ended up calling her and talking to her.

JACLYN: This is who you learned Pinterest from? So you were like you were who I learned Pinterest from. And there was kind of awkward feelings around like oh, if I started selling something....

NICOLE: And I didn't just want to be like oh, I'm launching this program. And she would. And she would have been like oh that's cool. She never would have said anything, but I still respected her so much, and I still do. So I called her and we talked and I was like Hey I'm gonna launch this program and she was like that's totally different from mine. I want you to go for it, do it. I want to see it succeed. And that helps me just model things, too. So I came up with this idea that was different. And I kinda based it off of Tattoo Parlors. So if you've ever watched the show in E or TLC: basically these are apprentices that come into a tattooing shop and they pay to be there and learn the art of tattooing. Now this is coming from someone who is very white and has like three tattoos. I'm not very into cool kind of like that but I love that.

JACLYN: You're so funny. But three is like.... I have no tattoos. You have tattoos!

NICOLE: But it's not like I have a sleeve or anything....

JACLYN: Oh, so in the tattoo circles, they're like oh you're not like a real tatted up gal.

NICOLE: I don't have an infinity sign or an astrology sign or anything like that. But I love the business model that the tattoo industry has set up with this apprenticeship. So basically an apprentice comes in. They pay and they learn the art of tattooing. And I was like man, that would be cool. What if somebody paid me to learn to do what I do and help me with my client

load? And then I was like oh I could do that, but do I want them working on my clients? I don't know. So to me I went on to think and simmer on that idea. And Jaclyn and Jessica were very like, "You're going to launch this in February". And I was like hahahaha.

JACLYN: [laughter] I think at first you were like "April!" But we said no, there is no reason this can't be February. Sometimes, the perfectionism creeps up in all of us. Like oh, down the road, maybe someday.

NICOLE: Actually, let me look as the calendar because I know... January 1st was the day I officially announced that I was launching the program. And I had someone sign up pretty much immediately. Because she really wants to learn from me, which is amazing.

JACLYN: I didn't realize it was January 1st.

NICOLE: Twenty-first. The 21st was a Monday and then we kicked off the program on February 18th, which is soon.

JACLYN: Which is a very soon. But if someone's listening and they're like oh my god, I want to add. So we haven't really touched on the value proposition here. So the cool thing is you are now training people that are already out there and have the business. Maybe social media but they don't really know Pinterest. Maybe they're virtual assistants and they want to add this revenues stream. If you weren't listening, she spends two hours a day on client work. The amazing thing with Pinterest is that if you know what you're doing you can automate so much of it, and you're brilliant at this. So you're able to bring in these other entrepreneurs and train them on how you do Pinterest and you get clients these big results. And then they're now able to offer that as a service to make more money on their business or they're able to now work for you and your clients and after they go through the program you'll start paying them.

NICOLE: Yeah, and my goal is – and I have one person right now – but I'm taking more who are interested in having Pinterest managed for them and maybe on a budget. Or I've never had that done before. So my program participants and I, and I haven't told them this yet, but they know during the program they're going to get work on client accounts. But they don't yet know that they're gonna get paid to manage accounts during the program. Because I didn't want people just come in and oh, I'm getting money. I wanted it to be a good fit. And that was very important to me because it was a mentor-mentee relationship. It's on eight weekends, it's a program. There are only five participants, so it's gonna be very

hands-on. I'm teaching them everything about my business. So I wanna make sure it was going to be a good working relationship for sure.

JACLYN: Totally. Well I don't even know if you have room for more. If someone's listening and they're like okay I need this, can you sneak them in? Can they get in on this amazing-ness?

NICOLE: So maybe not participating on the program on this round. I am going to do a second round. But I do as of this time still am open to taking in people who need their Pinterest managed at a discounted rate with some really good, fabulous people.

JACLYN: Oh, because **[25:57]** is going through the program! So you can take on more clients. Oh, I love it. Well that is an amazing opportunity. We're not done yet, but where can they go to get this?

NICOLE: If they're interested in learning more about the program, it's saunderssays.com/pinpro. But if you're just interested in having someone manage your account you can just email me at nicole@saunderssays.com.

JACLYN: I'll put it all on the show notes. We'll spell out your email so you don't get spammed. Okay, so this is all amazing. I love what you're doing with all of this. Why don't you share some of the mindsets? Because we talked a little bit about wanting to get into the visibility of what you're doing, with the big visibility successes that you've had. First I wanna talk about some of the mindset shifts that you've had to do. Because this is not all just strategy. A lot of this is in the head going on in here.

NICOLE: Yes. I always tell my husband, and he does his thing. He's not in my business everyday like I am. So the entrepreneur space is very different and the corporate space. Even what you learn probably in business school or whatever. "So you're teaching people to do what you do; are you not gonna loose clients?" And I was like: no. Think about it this way. **I am sharing, I'm open to abundance. Because if I was the only Pinterest person, it still doesn't mean I'm gonna have everybody who wants to work with me. Personality and fit, that's a big key to that.** I don't know how many people do Pinterest. But there's a lot of us. So I can teach something one way, and somebody else can teach it a different way, but that person who wants to work with somebody who does Pinterest; they might click with that person. Or the way they teach might be different. So there's enough out there for all of us. I really believe that. And I've seen it through what you and Jessica not only say buy what you do. And even through my mentor who taught me how to do my Pinterest business, too.

JACLYN: Yes. Oh, I love that. So do you wanna share any money mindset that you've had? [laughter]

NICOLE: Jaclyn's laughing like every month. **So every month in the Lady Biz, I'm like oh my gosh, all my bills are due, what am I gonna do?**

JACLYN: I feel like I'm leading the witness though. I'm like do you have anything to share on this? But let's keep it real here. I love the strides you made with this.

NICOLE: **Yeah. I went from a job that was a guaranteed paycheck every other week. Now it's like nothing's guaranteed. I have to keep my clients and I have to be successful. And I don't go out and say I need clients. I used to say that before Jaclyn worked her magic on me. And even during the summer when things were slow, I was reading *You're a Badass at Making Money*, and really working on that mindset and being open.**
Yeah sure, my husband might have laughed at me when I was saying my little mindset mantras about money. "I'm open to receiving whatever the universe wants to send my way." **And I had an abundance of time at that point so I really spent that time in investing in my mindset and changing how I felt about money.** But even last month, I was like oh my gosh it's the 20th; everything's due in the next three days! But I still know I have stuff coming up. I don't need to freak out about it. I just have to be better about writing things down and saying it. **But even reading *Profit First*, setting money aside for taxes and being grateful that I get to work for myself and pay those taxes instead of working for a corporate job where somebody pays those taxes on my behalf.**

JACLYN: That's the biggest shift I saw in you. And just being able to look at it a different way. And maybe not those old feelings of the corporate or of the scarcity, like oh my god something's due – which is scary. Last year when I had that income dip, but to be able to flip that around and really notice how many things have been going well. And sometimes when we're scared about stuff, we don't even see what's right in front of us. And to get the systems but **to also shift the mindset to gratitude has been really powerful.**

NICOLE: Oh yeah. Even just, like I said, **I was grateful to have that time abundance.** And now my time is slowly but surely shrinking. But I get to work on either one-on-one or on whatnot with clients. So I have to be very strategic and try to spend more time in my office instead of working on the couch watching Netflix. It has definitely been a joyful ride. And knowing I might have had these bad experiences in the past and turning those into no, I'm thankful that it happened because now I will truly

know who my great mentor is and who really does practice abundance leadership. And I can see that in practice myself as well.

JACLYN: Totally. We don't have to go into that [laughter]. Maybe you've had some bad experiences this whole year. It has been bad, like everything's been amazing and there's just this great upward trajectory. You've had some struggles, too. And you haven't let that be an excuse.

NICOLE: Yep. Exactly. To stop investing and to stop taking action. To stop taking big leaps.

JACLYN: Tell us some of the visibility opportunities that you've gone after or have just fallen on your lap. Because since you have owned being the Go-to-Gal for Pinterest, I feel like you *are* the Go-to-Gal for Pinterest. It just happened so fast.

NICOLE: Yeah. So basically the day we had our meeting in August, you had mentioned on someone there, and you came home and left and immediately sent her a message and said "So Jaclyn dropped your name casually in our meeting; wanna do a virtual coffee chat?" And she was like yeah! So that was my first coffee chat; it was amazing. And then from there it's just starting to see people in groups and taking that conversation from a private message or a DM on Instagram. And knowing I'm not going to this expecting anything. I'm messaging you because you're cool or I've seen something I like, and not expecting to receive something in return. If it goes to "Hey I'd love to do a virtual coffee chat with you", then great. From there, it could just be that you have connected more. But a lot of those coffee chats have turned into collaborations or oh, I hired you and you hired me. So many things have come from that. I now have an accountability partner who I had a virtual coffee chat with. I have a client who I'm also a client of hers. It's been really good to start taking those relationships from just talking into Facebook groups and hoping it sticks, to oh hey, I saw you were talking about this and I'd love to know more about that. And really connecting in a deeper level.

JACLYN: Totally. And you're doing speaking.

NICOLE: I am, yeah.

JACLYN: Like a bunch of speaking.

NICOLE: I had my first class in September right after we had met. And I've done quite a few classes within my community in Charlotte. I've done some

webinars with some community colleges and small business centers. People then reach out to me and they're like oh, I need to know how to do this. So basically I'm snowballed into "Oh you do strategy sessions, you do this. Can you teach my team?" Those types of things. Even those connections came from my mentor. So Jessica connected me to a lady at the community college that she had worked with. My mentor who I mentioned previously. She connected me with somebody local to me who recently was on your podcast, Jenny. She was fabulous. She lived right down the road from me. I haven't met her in person yet. But I'm speaking at her conference in April. So all of these things come from connections and people who aren't afraid to share their resources with you. And for that I'm grateful and we'll continue to pay it forward.

JACLYN: Yes. And I think because you pay it forward, too, that's why so many of your friends and colleagues – everyone's been referring you, too. I love the support. And it doesn't just happen to everyone. I think because you lead with generosity, you are who you are and that's why it keeps coming back to you.

NICOLE: Well, I will take it along with some huggers. So if you ever see me in person, I love hugs.

JACLYN: I'm a hugger, too. That's why we get along so well. Well, any last pieces of advice or thoughts you wanna share?

NICOLE: I think a lot of success... and for me a lot of people are like "oh, you've only been in business a year or not even a year? I thought you've been doing this for at least four years". I think a lot of that, all my life people have always thought I was older or more mature, whatever. But regardless of maturity level, if you wanted to do something, you just have to go and do it. You can't say oh I wish I could do this. I know al the time I'm like oh man, that would be nice if I could be an Olympic figure skater. How about practice to be an Olympic figure skater? No! It looks amazing but definitely I was oh, I want to learn to do ballet because I never did points Well, I went to one ballet class. Guess who's not going to ballet? Me! Because I'm not putting the effort there. I am in charge of what happens to me. So if I'm not dedicating... I can sit and bitch all day long and nothing's gonna change. But you have to be willing and go out and do the work. And yes, things are gonna happen. You're gonna lose clients. You're gonna make somebody mad. But **to have the resilience and the determination and to know that your success depends on you and you alone – that's when the magic's gonna happen.**

JACLYN: Damn, preach it girl! I love this! This is so good.

NICOLE: So I'll be back next week...

JACLYN: [laughter] Thank you so much for jus taking us on this journey with you. Where can we keep in touch? Where can people come follow you.

NICOLE: I am all over the place, saunderssays.com; you can find me there. Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, of course Pinterest. The best way to find me though and reach out if you want to connect with me one-on-one is to send me a message on Instagram. I would love that. And even as an introvert, I've bene getting into those voice messages on there, which is new. I love it. And I always have to warn people, "Hey it's Nicole, I have a southern accent." Obviously If you're listening to this...

JACLYN: If you're listening, they've picked up on that by now. Alright. Amazing. Thank you so much.

NICOLE: Well thanks so much, Jaclyn for having me. And I love listening to your podcast each and every week on Mondays.