

Josh: ... everyone. All right. Well, welcome to our first episode of Founders Table. This is a series where we're just diving deep behind the scenes with some early stage founders to uncover those highly practical lessons to help other entrepreneurs in our community. And so, as an agency, as Ember Tribe, we're really fortunate to be able to work with a lot of talented founders, people who have years of experience in business.

But also, people who have figured out how to do this as they go. And so, I'm really excited for our guests today and I figured, let's just kick this off. Lance and Malia, let's start with you. Tell us a little bit about yourselves and your business.

Lance: Hey Josh. Thanks for having us. Yeah, our business is Moderne Monocle and it was founded by my beautiful wife here, Malia. I'll let her tell us a little about how we came across founding Moderne Monocle. And the little hint is the reading glasses we have on.

Malia: Yes. Like most of us, both of us lost vision in our 40s and neither of us really resonated with the reading glasses. I think for me, mostly the problem was I could never find them. I'd buy them and I have them in all the rooms, and then as soon as I would try to read something, I'll be like, "Where's my glasses?"

Lance: The head pad.

Malia: The head hat, the butt hat. And one day I went to go read a menu and I was like, "Where's my glasses?" I could not find them once again. And I was like, "Maybe if I had just tied it around my neck, I could find them." Like joking to myself. And I looked down and I had a pendant on and I was like, "Hmm."

Full light bulb moment. And so, that was the start of it. And then I had to just do all the recon. I was like, "I have no jewelry making background." But I always liked fashion and art. And so, it just a lot of research and a lot of shut doors and-

Lance: A lot of Shark Tank.

Malia: We watched Shark Tank like every episode.

Lance: Before all this, we were Shark Tank fans, but it [inaudible] solving a problem. And she was really excited, she said she'd never designed jewelry before, but just dived in and took the bull by the horns and figured it out. But she's always been really creative and had a fashion sense.

She helps dress me because I'm the opposite. But she saw the problem, she designed some really beautiful jewelry. And within that, the pendant is disguised as a magnifier pendant.

Malia: You can see. This is one of our new designs.

Lance: So, the idea is, it's not to replace your reading glasses, but it's for the quick hits. For the ingredients at the store, for the menu. When you want to go to dinner, you don't want to have to worry about your reading glasses.

Malia: And just even around the house, because I don't like to have always have to do this all day, I just pop it out anytime I need to read anything. It's like super easy. But then I wanted to create them so they were stylish and cute.

And sometimes, when we do a show or something, people walk by and they're like, "That's a beautiful necklace." And I wanted that. I wanted people to love the jewelry and possibly even buy it, even though they didn't need it. But really just to have a functional, beautiful, stylish piece.

Lance: That's the best thing when they come in and they buy it, and then you know they don't know that it's a magnifier.

Malia: Yeah, and then realize it-

Lance: And they're like, "Oh." They do the little dog head thing where it clicks in their brain. That's the greatest compliment we can get is when they buy it for the jewelry and not for the magnifications.

Malia: Yeah.

Josh: Yeah. It's amazing. You guys have really struck the balance between utility and fashion accessory. And the fact that you can market to people with both of those angles is a tremendous asset for your business.

Malia: Yeah, it is. We appreciate that. But within that marketing and that connecting with people is getting that messaging across. I know we'll talk about that a little bit later, but it's [inaudible], it has a utilitarian element to it. And getting that message across is challenging because you only have a finite amount of time before the short attention span of all of us moves on. So, we have to-

Josh: Totally. Totally. John, let's go over to you. Tell us a little bit about yourself and your business.

John Aragon: Yeah, yeah. Thank you for having me. Yeah. John Aragon designer, entrepreneur, wear many hats. Yeah. I helped start the company, Native Supply, and everything that we do there with HDA, with my business partner and mentor KB. And on the front end is essentially, we're designing clothes. Really, really, really, really cool clothes.

But in so many other ways, from the onset, we wanted to create a vehicle to communicate our convictions and our values. So, as much as it is clothing, which is great and it's stylistic, and we put a lot of attention and detail into it, what we've said historically is just really, it is a vehicle to communicate a message that

is really at the core of who we are, what we believe in terms of our relationship with God and how we should relate with the world that is in need.

Not just for God's love and mercy, but in all the other ways that we can show love and compassion. So yeah, we started a few years ago not knowing that it would grow into what it is today. Though we had the hopes and aspirations that it would. But along the way, I think we quickly found, as we are trying to solve the internal, external and philosophical problems for our fans and customers, that we were making a meaningful impact in people's lives.

And that was just life-giving in and of itself. But yeah, so we've been doing it for a couple of years. I have a background in development, marketing, design, a few other things. So, as KB and I, as we've talked about it over the years, it just made sense. It just came naturally as we worked towards it.

So yeah, as we've been designing the clothing, I know the second year or so, when we really started to collect feedback and reviews, we had one customer reach out to us and essentially say, "My goodness this t-shirt that says not today Satan has just emboldened me. Not just in my faith, but now I'm being stopped by people in school."

She's a high school girl. And maybe she's a bit timid about how to communicate her faith or her values and her convictions. But the clothing just served as a vehicle to allow her to start those conversations. And that's one of thousands upon thousands of stories that we've heard and that's just life-giving in and of itself.

But yeah, so we're creating an experience for our customers. We're trying to cultivate a certain type of lifestyle for them. Though our target audience is that, we've gone outside of those faith communities, which is really incredible as well. But yeah, just a little bit about myself, a little bit about the company.

Josh: That's awesome. Thanks for sharing that. Something that both of you have touched on, I'd love for both of you to answer, feel free to jump in whoever wants to jump in first is, how do you get customer feedback and how do you go about acting on customer feedback?

John, you mentioned a little bit just about getting some of those personal stories from your customers and how you're seeing some of your mission fulfilled by getting that feedback. But very practically, how you solicit that feedback and then when you get it, how do you make sure that you're able to act on it and do something about it and take it into consideration.

Malia: John, why don't you go first?

John Aragon: Sure. Yeah. We have the traditional ways that we are collecting reviews and our CSR team is managing either questions or concerns from our customers, which is

really awesome and great. One of the things we started to do a few years ago was pack and ship everything. Our team is making every single piece.

So, as we're shipping the products out, we also ship out a little card that talks about our values, our convictions. And then from season to season, the seasonal collections that we release, we have a particular message behind each of those pieces. And then we ask for their feedback and that's either through a form like the QR code or an email that we get back.

So, it's not just limited to the quality of the clothing, the messaging that's on the clothing itself, which is really powerful, but just the holistic experience that they've had. So, if you have ideas, send them over. If there's something you would like us to do, let us know.

One of the things that we did that in so many ways was really a response to a moment that I think we were all living this past year during COVID, we retrofitted all of our factories to produce N95 masks. Myself, KB, Nat, others from our team, we have relationships with nonprofits and people in the medical industry and we just had a burden for it.

For us, it really wasn't about making money, profit. We had somewhat of a campaign strategy, but we had the means to do it. We had the machines to do it. We had the team to do it. And we were able to facilitate that for local hospitals here, up in New York, nonprofits here in our city, and in so many ways that was for us coming alongside our customers, where I think for many of us, I'm sure we felt this existential crisis of, I want to help.

I want to contribute meaningfully to this thing. And what we said is, "Hey, if you order one of our custom HEA masks, we're going to make 10 N95 mask." And then as the supply chain of that depleted, we moved towards surgical masks and I think we're doing like 20 per one mask.

We didn't make money off of it, but it was just really a way for us to speak into the moment and respond to what our customers were experiencing and just using our services. Things that we're familiar with, the things that we're able to execute well and for a good cause as well.

But yeah, so those are some of the ways we get feedback either through the more traditional intentional ways, or just having our pulse on like the [inaudible] of culture. What's happening? How can we speak meaningfully and redemptively into this moment?

Speaker 5:

Hey, John, one question I had as a follow up is, I know that your team subscribes to more of a scarcity business model. We can talk more about that later, but how has that played out in some of the user feedback, reviews that you get, maybe tell us a little bit more how the scarcity model impacts maybe how folks are responding and leaving reviews and user generated content and things like that.

John Aragon:

Yeah. Great question. That was intentional from the onset, what can be ... and depending on the industry you're in, inventory's a huge thing, right? We're not just dealing with digital products, but we're dealing with physical items. So, in some respect it is inventory, but we are intentionally trying to create scarcity behind the products to create momentum, to create anticipation for our customers.

And we've improved upon that, so that we're able to communicate, "Hey, for our VIP customers who are in different tiers, this is when you can expect the drop. This is when you can expect the restock." That incentivizes people to either spend more or share more. But I think the scarcity model has served us well, because from season to season, we're dropping dozens and dozens of different items.

We have conditioned our audience to know that if I don't buy this now, it may not come back. And we don't always communicate that. And that's not us being dishonest. That's just us within our own discretion, making the decision, "We want to restock this." And other pieces who have gone on for three, four seasons, we just keep restocking because it sells incredibly well.

And we love the message behind it. So, we like the purpose that it served and we're always thinking critically from season to season, how we can execute that well. Leveraging creating anticipation, excitement around it, but also obviously restocking and making a profit when we're able to as well.

Lance:

You're cool, John. You're an inspiration to us as well.

Malia:

I know. Beautiful. Yes, we get our feedback mostly from reviews. We have a couple of different ways that we get the reviews. We send a follow-up email after they received their purchase, just to see how they like our product, and if there's anything that they would share, anything like that.

We also have a review system on our website, which is an app on Shopify, which is Loox, it's like L-O-O-X, in which they're encouraged to review our product. Also, through our Claveo emails that we send out, we encourage reviews.

Lance:

And Facebook.

Malia:

And Amazon as well. So, we go through all the reviews. It's a small shop we have. I do all the customer service and we read every single review and then sometimes I'll even reach out to the customer and be like, "Hey, can we chat? I'd love to hear more about this."

So, I can figure out what's not working for them. Maybe they're not using the monocle correctly. There's several conversations I've had where they don't think that it works and I explain to them how many inches from the eye exactly.

Because we have the same lens for all of our pieces. So, depending on your sight, you have to work with-

Lance: You just dial it in a little bit.

Malia: Yeah. So, just really trying to keep, like you said, John, keeping our finger on the pulse of our customers and being really thorough with like reading all the Facebook comments and all the IG comments, and seeing if there's any validity. Sometimes they're just people bored and-

Lance: Sometimes they're just a pain. But what's really important, and Malia realized this and really appreciates it, she loves doing customer service stuff. She loves responding to the Facebook stuff, the emails, to the phone calls when people call in. And half the time when I'm listening, they're shocked that she calls.

She's like, "Oh, thank you." And then she calls back and she talks to them for a couple minutes, especially nowadays, I think people just want to talk. She'll be on a five-minute conversation with a lady wherever, and just about how it's great for her.

I don't know what's [inaudible] in a day or so. She may maybe a little lonely, but she gets a lot out of building that customer ... having that rapport. It takes a long time, but doing that, having that one-on-one attention to your customer, I think helps build a solid base.

Malia: Absolutely. I think it's surprising for people when a company does that, but I just, as the owner, to reach out. And that's probably my favorite part is when I get to talk to the customer and see how it's impacting their life and if it's helping them. It's just cool to connect with these people I don't even know, you know what I mean? So, I like having that one-on-one experience with customers.

Josh: Yeah. I just want to underscore that point. There's a guy, Paul Graham, who has an essay that's been cited a lot. It's to do the unscalable things. And following up with every customer, it won't scale. But I think a lot of times we're obsessed with scale and we're obsessed with what can be systematized and then you miss out on these opportunities to get great feedback, great qualitative feedback from customers, which is going to set you up for success in the future.

So yeah, I love to hear both of you doing that. I do want to direct a question back to Lance and Malia just around PR. You guys have been a lightning rod for PR it seems. Having appearances on The Today Show and Kelly Ripa, maybe you could just peel back the curtain a little bit on that. How did you get those engagements and how would you recommend other people maybe trying to position themselves in the same way?

Malia: We send out a lot of product. We send out a lot of packages. A lot of it is just trying to figure out who our key target demographic is, and then we find

celebrities that we think might be open to that. We send out tons of packages to their stylists. Our publicist has some cool [inaudible]. Just anything that we can do to get the product out there. And we've lucked out. I feel like we just lucked out with a couple of really amazing-

Lance: The Kelly Ripa thing, it was really organic. We sent them a package a long time ago, possibly even a year ago, which is typical and nothing happens. But I guess her stylist gave it to her as a gift, or just gave it to her and she fell in love with it. I should say that some people think that our monocles are stupid. Like, "Oh my gosh, that's such a dumb thing. Just put glasses on."

But unless you need reading glasses, unless you get it, unless you lose them constantly, you either get it or you don't. And Kelly Ripa gets it. She's in the same boat that we're in, where she understands the product, she loves the aesthetic of it, the stylish way it looks and the convenience of it.

And she's such an adorable, smart, just on it person all around. She had a really cute segment where, which is what happens, you get to the conversation like, it's a conversation starter. A lot of our friends go to dinner with these things and they're like, "Oh my gosh, what's that?" And they talked about they're all getting old or whatever, and it's a conversation starter.

It's fun. And that's a big part of the culture that we try to cultivate a little bit. But even when Kelly Ripa, her producer was making fun of her for having it and then they got into a little back and forth about, "You're going to need it one day too, young lady." And that's the truth. That was the organic moment that we never could have planned, but-

Malia: We followed up that segment, we sent them more monocles. And we were like, "Here, give some to Ryan. Give it to your husband." We must capitalize on that, because-

Lance: Yeah. Ryan said on the show that, "I don't need this, I have my reading glasses." We were like, "All right. Let's send Ryan a couple of our dog tag style monocles. They're more for the men. And see if they resonate with him."

Josh: That's amazing.

Malia: Getting your product out there, just giving it to people like [inaudible], you get it and another person has it. Then they talk about it to somebody else. It's just putting it out there.

Lance: And you do have to be a little smart-

Malia: [inaudible] for us because they're an older demographic.

Lance: The young hip kids, we do pretty well with them for Christmas and-

Malia: A gift giving.

Lance: When they're gift giving. But it's not something that they relate to. So, we're not really super Instagram, but you have to find your audience. And up until even recently, we still are in the audience finding phase. And then maybe you never get out of it. That's why we come to you guys to help us with that. But that was critical to know who to send it to, who we can hopefully get some feedback from and create our base from there.

Josh: It's amazing. And sometimes it's more important to know who your customers aren't than it is to know who they are. It's good to say no, it's good to exclude when you're doing something like this. Yeah. John, that might be a good segue for you. You are actually a pretty talented guy in terms of your stack, if you will, with your skills. You know SEO, you're a graphic designer, you know digital marketing.

So, what are some of the reasons why you went about saying, "No, I actually want to hire an agency to do this work?" I guess maybe walk us through some of the business strategy piece of why you would decide to maybe delegate this portion of your workflow.

John Aragon: Great question. Yeah, so KB, my partner, I've worked for and with him for years. In so many ways, he spearheaded that. I've worked with other agencies in the past as I've worked in design firms, in big and small companies. I've always seen the value of partnering with an agency and not simply seeing them as a means to outsource something you don't do or can't do or don't have the means or resources to do.

But knowing that there's a dedicated team that's solely focused on that, and you partnering with them just brings incredible value. That's why that space, that industry, is so effective because companies see the value in that, and you guys are getting insight into specific ways that we can target customers more effectively as you give yourself to the work.

It does make sense for us in that respect and obviously shared conviction values, that really sold it for us. When Katie and I discussed it with you guys, and TJ and the rest of the team, it was just fluid. We could have gone with any other agency. There are other agencies that are able to, or claim to do similar things or things better. But the conversation with you guys just made a lot of sense.

Shared values, convictions, what you guys were able to offer, not making false promises or anything like that, but realistic goals and objectives that for us as a team was important to see. But yeah, it just made sense. It was natural, we have individuals on our team that are talented. I've done SEO, SEM stuff myself over the years, but having another team that's focused and dedicated to that is incredible.



Josh: Your check is in the mail, John. I promise I'm not fishing for that compliment. I appreciate it. But no, I think what I'm hearing you say there too is it's like, just because you can do something doesn't mean you should, and that means that you have to say no to something else. So, it sounds like there's things that you've identified in your business that you need to double down on in order to keep the business moving forward.

John Aragon: Yeah, absolutely. That's a big part, just being part owner and CEO, janitor, you have to do all the things. But at a certain point, you have to learn how to delegate things to other team members and partnering with others so that you can scale effectively.

Scalability is always a huge thing, regardless of what stage you're at, either with your company or startup and identifying what those pain points are is crucial. So, we've identified all those milestones for us as a team and there's huge opportunities for growth for us, of course. But this was one avenue that we felt that was important.

Speaker 5: I'm just curious, John, what are some of the activities since you've brought on an agency has allowed you to take a step back and do that you wouldn't have otherwise done? Like, what other activities are you picking up? We hear that a lot from founders, it's like, "Hey, you guys can handle this, which allows me to go and do R&D or product development and things like that." What are you up to these days?

John Aragon: Yeah. I'm still wearing many hats, which is great. I still enjoy it. I'm still exercising the discipline of delegating things more, but having ... I can oscillate between being creative and incredibly analytical and tactful and making sure every decision is informed by data.

So, just have that aspect and component of our marketing strategy offloaded for me personally, has freed me up to think more creatively about the execution of those ideas outside of how things are performing in terms of what the data's saying. For me, it's just giving me more creative bandwidth to do what I'm good at.

And at times come in and give thoughts and ideas when it comes to the data and how that can be executed and what decisions can, or cannot be made. But that's why you guys are there, which is amazing. For me personally, that's just been amazing. I'm sure for others, it's similar stories or you can give yourself to other parts of the company.

But that, and then other things that I'm responsible for within our team with myself and KB and others that are part of our team, so that we make sure other parts of the company are working and functioning fluidly.

Josh: Lance and Malia over to you, you guys are not just partners in the business, but you're also partners in life. I'm wondering if you could tell us a little bit about how you go about maybe divvying up the work and maybe what advice do you have for other couples who are in the same place and they're running something together. What advice would you have for them as they're taking this on?

Lance: Whatever she says goes.

Malia: It's like figuring out what you're good at. There are certain things, I'm very creative, I'm just mostly right-brained. And so, the other techie staff, those kinds of things, it's difficult for me. I call him the VP in charge of everything.

Lance: I'm not as techie or skilled as John is, for example. But I come from a video background, so I have that analytical brain a little bit and I do that. But we like being around each other. We love each other. We've been married for a long time that we enjoy each other's company. That works for us.

I have a lot of friends who need a little downtime from their spouse and we get it, we get that downtime, but we just enjoy being around each other. And it's challenging to grow the business. And speaking on that point is, is like a lot of people ask us, "Well, how do you do it? What do you do? Or how do you start an [inaudible] or jewelry business or anything online."

And John hit on it as well, you want to delegate out to ... at a certain point, you try to figure some stuff out. But eventually, you need to give it to people who really know what they're doing so you don't have to worry about it anymore. I tried to do some Facebook ads. It was horrific. It was awful. I even copied exact ads that other people had done.

Malia: Pushed all the same buttons.

Lance: We pushed the same buttons. Our first digital company we hired, I copied their ad and I tried to [inaudible], and then I just tried to do a clone and it didn't work.

Malia: At all.

Lance: At all. So, at a certain point, you really want to surround yourself with people that are smarter than you. You know what I mean? That whole saying. And like you said, trusting in you guys frees us up, frees up Malia to come up with some more designs. And it frees me up to do some of the other stuff I want to do with our wholesale markets and-

Malia: Yeah. Like figure out what you're good at and [inaudible] professionals to do that I think is the thing. We just do it as much as we can do and then we're like, "Okay, this isn't something we really know how to do." And then we try to find someone that can help us.

Lance: Yeah.

Josh: That's a good word. That's awesome to hear. And then Lance, you did mention about the video, I think that's probably a good point for us to speak about video, like the power of video right now. How do you see video playing into the marketing that you're doing, or just anybody who has an online business? How do you see video fitting into that as an asset that should be used?

Lance: Yeah, video has the power to make somebody feel an emotion. Photos are great, and they're very necessary, but coming from a video world, I put a lot of faith in being able to use a video as a vehicle to make somebody feel something. To feel sadness, to laugh, to be thoughtful about it. As I talked about before, we had a little bit of a tough time explaining to people what our product is, it's both beautiful and functional.

And we found that a photograph couldn't do it. You either have a shot of somebody using it. You have a shot of it sitting on them so you can see the beauty. And really, the video allows you to capture all aspects of what our product is. That worked a lot better for us. And I was happy about that. So, I was able to bring something to the table and make some video content.

Through this, I had to learn different [inaudible] different content for Facebook versus Snapchat. 16 by nine, or nine by 16, and all these different formats. And that was an educational time for me. But that's the other side of it is you definitely [inaudible] throughout where the video's going, what your end product is, and you back into it and make sure your production is orchestrated to meet those objectives.

Josh: Fantastic. So, we're going to start to land the plane here, but I got a couple more questions I'd love for both of you to weigh in on. John, let's go over to you. When it comes to leaders that we've worked with, founders that we've worked with, one thing that we always find is common amongst all of them is that they're lifelong learners.

And so, I'm curious to hear what are some of the ways that you continue learning? Maybe what are some of the resources that you'll consult? What are some of the ways that you learn from mistakes? But just this theme of learning, how do you continue to be this lifelong learner to be better at what you do?

John Aragon: Yeah. I'm reading. A lot of reading, a lot of reading. I think experience is phenomenal as well. I think we can all attest to work in a company or starting a company, you learn a lot as you go. Especially as it scales. So yeah, that's been a huge help. Obviously, with getting things started with what we have going on, learning from our mistakes and pressing ahead and moving forward.

But for me, it's just staying informed, just keeping a pulse in terms of what's happening in the e-commerce world, what new partnerships are going on within

the e-commerce world and how that affects us in terms of our bottom line and what we're able to do so that we can serve our customers and our audience effectively.

So, it's just a lot of reading. Honestly, it's just a lot of reading. Then, but attending conferences and networking, and just having an idea of what's happening within our space so that we can speak meaningfully into it. And then we can also have an idea of where things are heading.

I think if anything, what the last year has shown us to is, and it differs from industry to industry, but certain businesses that were solely brick and mortar saw the value of like, wow, we need to really ramp up our online presence because people are so accustomed to shopping online at their favorite store and having a particular experience there.

So, how do we replicate that? I think that's been a huge learning experience for several people. But yeah, for myself is just a lot of reading. A lot of reading. It depends on the quarter, wherever we are in the year, but some months I can find myself deep in the silos of design and color theory and seeing what color tones and pat tones, how those things speak into where people are at.

Or sometimes I can find myself reading articles or even books on entrepreneurship and just having a mindset that fosters creativity and growth and being goal-driven. Things like that. So, just a lot of reading. It's just a lot of reading. Obviously, like I mentioned before, just networking, meeting with other individuals that are passionate about the things that they have going on.

And it doesn't necessarily have to be within your same vertical, but they have a conviction, a passion to pursue what they're pursuing, and there's a myriad of shared interests there. So, finding opportunities to network with people within your own city and just developing those partnerships.

You never know what those things can turn to. So yeah, reading, partnering with individuals within your local space in terms of networking, and if you're in the technical side of the business, just having an idea of what Google is doing. Just looking up the latest search trends and seeing how you can speak into that with blog posts and things like that.

Or with creativity and design, just thinking and looking at what some of the larger companies are doing, what's been effective there. So yeah, I think I'm a lifelong learner. It's so crucial. It's so important to me as it pertains to the business.

Josh: That's great answer. If you keep reading that much though, you're definitely going to need one of the Moderne Monocle's [inaudible].

John Aragon: Actually, yes.

Josh: Yeah. Malia and Lance, what about you? What are some of the resources that you tap into or depend on, and what are some of the ways that you stay ahead with learning in your business?

Lance: Yeah. I read mostly comic books. No, I'm just kidding. I'm playing catch up. To be honest, I'm playing a lot of catch up within the digital realm. So, I try to keep up, as John mentioned, with what Facebook is doing. Their changes and how they're not showing us what our [rowas] is anymore, and all that sort of stuff.

And learning Amazon a little bit better. So, I'm trying to keep abreast of all the changes, which are almost impossible to, of all the technical stuff that happens within our business. And I think that allows Malia to free up with some of the trends that she's doing stylistically.

Malia: Yes, definitely. The fashion side of things is a lot more fun and easy. It's just like figuring out what's trending and trying to guess what will trend. And then also keeping in mind my demographic, they're not extremely trendy. They like things that are more classic. So, it's like trying to find that fine line of what I think that they will love. So, creatively, that's what I'm doing.

But the whole thing is constantly a learning process. When you're starting your own company, starting an e-commerce, we didn't even know what digital marketing was a couple of years ago when we first started. So, it's all a learning process. Every single day is just like, "Oh, we know we need to expand in this way."

And then we research, how can we expand that way? We talk to other makers and see, how did you do this? What's the best way that you do get wholesale accounts? It's all a learning process and it's great fun. I really enjoy what we do. It's just like, I feel very blessed that we're on this journey.

Lance: Yeah. Yeah. She knows. She's made a couple of friends with some other jewelry makers and other people in the business. And as John mentioned, that's one of the things is don't be in your bubble.

You have to get outside your bubble, even with what we're going through right now, hopefully coming to an end. But you have to reach outside. Whether it's on a Zoom or hopefully coffee with somebody, but seeing what their experiences are, and it's all about being human.

Josh: Excellent. Yeah. I think that's probably going to be a great place for us to end. If you could both just imagine yourself speaking to somebody who is in your shoes, but earlier. They've built their store. They get their product in mind, they're about to launch, what's one word of encouragement that you could give to that early stage founder.

I think a lot of people feel lonely in this. Even though there's a lot of communities online, there's that sense of loneliness and maybe fear. So, what's one word of encouragement that you would give to anybody who's early stage with their business.

Malia: Go ahead, John. [inaudible].

Lance: I don't know. Gosh, I guess I would say it's ... I don't know. What would you say? In some ways it's very simple. It's simple and ... I don't know. What would you say?

Malia: I just that if you're doing something that you're passionate about and you love, then just try to let go of the fear. You're going to be able to find the answers, just keep pushing ahead, do what you can each day until you can't anymore. And just have faith that this will unfold in the right time.

But I think in the beginning stages, it can be quite overwhelming. But the information is out there. So, ask other people. Try to reach out to other people that have been there before. Research online. It's all doable. It's all totally doable. So, just have faith and just have faith in what you're passionate about.

Josh: Beautiful.

Lance: Very good. I guess I would add to that a little bit that there're so many resources out there. There's Wix to make your own website. There're so many things where you can do it yourself. And if you make your own website, your knowledge base is going to grow exponentially.

It's probably not going to be the website that you're going to want to lead with, with your company, you're probably going to want to get some professional help or try again. But like Malia said, put one foot in front of the other. Every day, put one foot in front of the other. And the other thing I live by is lists. You have to make a list of, you want to get to point Z, how do you get there?

You have to go through ABCD first. Make list of that so every day isn't overwhelming, but you can ship that off a little bit. And if you want to have lunch with somebody who does e-commerce marketing, then go have lunch of that person.

You're going to learn a little bit, and they're going to say, "You know what? You should check out this. Or if you want to build your Facebook, there's resources online." But like Malia said, don't get overwhelmed. There's a lot-

Malia: Enjoy that journey of it, because it's fun creating a business. You just have to don't think about the destination as much as each day unfolding this passion that you have.

Josh: Really wise. It's really good wisdom. John, why don't you wrap this up. What's your one word of encouragement?

John Aragon: Yeah. I think it's knowing your why; why am I doing this? If you feel called to pursue the thing that you feel called to pursue, then go 100% at it. I think that's really, really crucial because there's going to be highs and lows as you're building your company, your institution and not everyone has the opportunity to get BC from the jump. Or if they're in the C stage, then they can just get influx of money and quickly staff 50 to 100 people.

So, if you're not in that position, just knowing your why, that's so crucial. And along with that, I think it was alluded to before here as well, that just doing research and knowing that those first couple of years is difficult and you may not be able to pay yourself and just being prepared for that financially, and just even researching your specific industry, your specific vertical, your specific market so you're making informed decisions along the way.

And you have an exit plan or you hunker down and you push forward. But yeah, for me, the biggest thing is the why. Why am I doing this? Why am I staying up till 3:00 AM to do X, Y, and Z on this specific day of the week? Oh, here's the thing that keeps me going. This is the driving motivation and this is why I'm doing what I'm doing.

But yeah, just identifying that why, I think that can either A, requires some soul searching or B, just see what your driving motivation can be. It could be something very heartfelt and beautiful, or it could be something incredibly vain. But just discovering that why is important.

Josh: It's amazing. I want to thank each of you for being here, Lance and Malia from Moderne Monocle, John from Native Supply, you guys had so much wisdom to share with us. We'll have links out to your brands and some good recasts of this content in this post, wherever it may be found. But yeah, thanks again for all of you being here. We're real excited about 2021.

Lance: Thank you, Josh. Thank you, [crosstalk].

Malia: Thank you, everyone.

Lance: Nice to meet you John.

John Aragon: Thank you guys. Nice meeting you guys. Thank you.

Speaker 5: [inaudible].

John Aragon: Yep. Bye.

Speaker 5: Bye-bye.

Josh:

Bye.