Foul Shots

After years of depressing disappointments in her career and personal life, entrepreneur Suzy Batiz is finally experiencing the sweet smell of success.

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Suzy Batiz

Before Suzy Batiz started her own company in 2007, she was an aspiring entrepreneur with a multitude of ideas. But each venture she launched would eventually flop. Sure, Batiz was flush with business acumen, but success stubbornly eluded her. Despite never quite being in the black, Batiz was no quitter. She also weathered tough times in her personal life. After two failed marriages, she had two sons to care for. Eventually, Batiz bounced back. She found Mr. Right, married him and then had another child, this time a daughter. Still, Batiz felt a void. She was still unhappy, and her marriage hit a bump. Her husband hinted that he'd had enough and was looking at the front door. Batiz sought professional help because she felt deep down that the problem was within. She signed up for a 10-day workshop with Byron Katie, an author and self-help expert, who showed Batiz that she was responsible for her own happiness.

Soon Batiz began concocting aromatherapy mixtures for herself and her friends. She'd found her calling. When her brother-in-law suggested they work together to create a bathroom odor eliminator, she rose to the task. After months of research with essential oil mixtures in her bathroom, Batiz created a spritz to spray in the toilet bowl before you go (whether at home or in public facilities), which stops shit—what Batiz calls "poo"—from stinking up the place.

Suddenly, life was a whole lot more fragrant. Finally, Batiz launched a successful business, one that has experienced considerable growth in revenues each year since its debut. Since then, she has expanded Poo-Pourri's product line to include hand sanitizers and lotions, among other aromatherapy winners.

Here, Batiz takes us through her life-changing transition from unhappy wife and mother to mostly happy wife, mother and CEO of her multimillion-dollar company.

What motivated you to take that workshop with Byron Katie, and what did you learn from her?

I was completely depressed. I was lost. Some people call it a midlife crisis, only it felt much worse

than any midlife crisis. And I really didn't know what to do, I didn't know which direction to go in. I had sworn off self-help books because, at that point, it felt like I'd read them all. One day, I went into the bookstore and there was Byron Katie's book Loving What Is. I opened it up and started reading and was instantly obsessed. It took me probably less than 24 hours to read the entire book. I said to myself, I needed to learn this. And within two weeks I was aware of what I needed to fix.

And what did you fix that then enabled you to use your newfound insight as a springboard to improving your life?

What I learned was, basically, that I had to relieve myself of the victim mentality and take responsibility for things in my life. We hear so many stories about what other people did to us. I had all those stories. I'd been in sexually and physically abusive relationships, and it's very disempowering when you play the victim role. But I didn't know what else to do. I went to traditional therapy, and it just wasn't working; we kept rehashing the stories. But there was no way out of it. What happened at Katie's seminar is I learned to take responsibility for my part in my problems. That gave me strength, and I became more powered. For example, one of the things Katie said whenever she did some work with me on the physical abuse was, "OK, so he hit you, is that true?" I'm like, "Yes." And basically the way it ended up is, "OK, well the first time he hit you and then you went back, right? So who hit you then?" The answer was, "I hit me." Katie said, "There's a lion in a cage and you keep going back to it, right? You know that this thing bites, but you keep going back in." After she showed me [what I was doing to myself], I was able to find some strength. That turned my life completely around.

Part of your mission is to help women live up to their potential, or at least try to. Why do you think so many women don't live up to their potential?

I think many women don't know what their potential is. Women are taught by society to take on a more submissive role and to feel that we're less than. It's all about our looks, our body. You know, our power points are kind of messed up. Sometimes we push in our career, but then our family lives go off balance. I just think women aren't taught how to balance everything and what true priorities are and how to be seen and to stand strong as a woman.

How has this business venture affected your mental outlook, beyond the fact that it's so successful?

Well, founding Poo-Pourri gave me a playground for creativity. Yes, I have a lot of stress; I run a multimillion-dollar company. That's the reality. But also, whenever I don't take it so serious and I'm allowed to play, it helps me a lot in my life. I can look at a critical business decision and really stress out over it, or I can say, "Hey, what does my gut say? OK, my intuition says let's do this, and, well, I've been broke before, so let's just go for it." The way this business helps me is that I don't have the fear I used to. I've been in tough situations, so I'm not afraid of that. I believe that is what keeps me on my toes.

When you first started your business, how concerned were you about failure?

You know, I wasn't concerned because I had spent about a year doing Byron Katie's work system—the self-inquiry she does on just money. I spent time trying to figure out what my issues were with money and where I learned to think about making money in certain ways. I expressed a lot of disempowering statements I wasn't even aware of—like, money is the root of all evil, and rich people take advantage of people, they're not nice. I had all of these beliefs growing up that were completely false, such as you can't be spiritual and rich. I had no idea that this was in my psyche. Once I cleaned all of that up, Poo-Pourri just became about having fun and going for it. I'm not scared of doing business. It's been more of a playground than anything, which to me is ultimate freedom.

How did you test your products, and when did you realize your idea had some legs?

Mixing essential oils was my hobby. I was always making oils for invigorating, refreshing spritzes. I was always doing different things. But tackling bathroom odor? My husband didn't understand why, plus, he just didn't think it would work. But I'm really good at research—that's one of my best attributes—so I contacted experts on essential oils all over the world. I asked them what oils I should use to control malodor. Then, they started sending me laundry lists. I had people from China and India and Europe all sending me the oils they thought I should use. That's when I started seeing commonalities. I ended up just playing around, and my husband and family would test them every day. It took about six months.

So how do you feel about your business now?

I sit here every day and I ask myself, "Is this is what I'm doing, really?" But, for me, this company is way more than a successful business. It's been a playground, not only for creativity but also for my spiritual growth. I am pushed on so many levels every day it's amazing.

Is running your business still fun?

I'll tell you, I am so lucky. It's been over four years, and there's not been a day when I get up and I say, "I don't want to go to the office."

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