

Felena Hanson's Story

You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something - your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life. - Steve Jobs

My life's story to some could seem scattered and a bit tumultuous; but there are a few ubiquitous themes: independence, entrepreneurship, diplomacy, and collaboration. Everything I've done, even selling peacock feathers as a child, has led up to my life's work: Hera Hub.

Before I dive into my history, I'll give you a flavor of my current business...

Take a moment and picture a unique workspace inspired by the "spa": beautiful art, great lighting, lots of greenery, running water, fantastic smells, and soft, tranquil music playing in the background. Picture a place where hundreds of like-minded women support one another in business and beyond... creating a nurturing environment where each woman can find the resources she needs to be successful in every aspect of her life. Welcome to my world!

Throughout this chapter I will share the journey and path to launch Hera Hub, the challenges I faced, and what that's taught me as I continue to build an international business. I want to share my challenges, successes, and the wisdom I've gained over the last 40 years, but also get down the to the nitty-gritty, the nuts and bolts of business and how I was able to create something tangible, yet sincere (a word not often associated with business) by creating Hera Hub.

Enterprising Genes

I grew up in a small town on the Central Coast of California (Arroyo Grande). I was taught at a young age that money is not gifted but rather earned. While I envied my friends who received a weekly allowance, I'm now appreciative of my parents for teaching me this important lesson.

My first real business venture was utilizing a resource I had in my own back yard... peacock feathers. Growing up in a relatively rural area allowed us to have lots of pets, one of which was a pair of peacocks – Mr. & Mrs. Peabody.

At age eight I decided to gather up the beautiful male peacock feathers, which shed naturally each fall, and attempt to sell them at the corner grocery store for \$1 each. The first day out I walked away with almost \$80 in cash at age eight! This one event fueled my entrepreneurial fire.



Parents

My parents got married young – both 21 – and dropped out of college (Fresno State) their third year. Neither of them ever completed their bachelor's degree. My parents moved from the San Joaquin Valley (thank God!) to the central coast to start a new life and business together.

My Father initially started a business in the every so glamorous field of addressing junk mail. During some weekend trips back to Fresno my Grandfather convinced him to take some rolls of carpet back to see if he could sell them. (After retiring from a career in banking my Grandfather opened a small retail floor covering business in Fresno.) With a drive to provide for his family, my Dad tried anything he could to make money in order to make ends meet. After many years of hard work he now has a thriving retail floor covering business that indeed provided for our family and more.



*One other side note: My Grandfather was a really unique guy. He was always engineering a pile of junk to create something interesting, like a self-driving 3-wheel bicycle. He was very patriotic, serving in World War II just after he and my Grandmother met. Later in life he purchased a vintage fire truck that he used to show off in all the local veteran's parades. You'll discover why this is ironic later in my story.

Dad – The Practical Business Man

I don't remember my Dad ever sitting down. Because his business was literally next door to our house he was constantly working. He was always on the move, building something new, making improvements here or there and fixing things around our property. He was always eager to teach me new things and encouraged me to get me involved in whatever he was doing. I don't think I remember him ever sitting on the couch and just relaxing!



Mom – The Artist

My Mom primarily supported my Father in the business, raised me, and also was very involved in her church and in the performing arts. My Mom still actively sings in the community choir and performs in Community Theater.

While my Mom didn't have a formal education or job description, she certainly wasn't spending any time on the couch either! In fact, she (for the most part) was responsible for building, not contracting out but actually building, the second story of our modest home and a barn at the back of our two-acre lot.

Family Name

I've always been proud of my unique first name. While it's often difficult for people to spell, it is memorable. How many people can say they own the domain of their first name? www.felena.com. I was named after my Great Grandmother, who was born in Sweden in 1900 and lived a full 88 years. I was lucky to get to spend the first part of my life with her.



Because I was an only child (which changed dramatically later) I had to be very imaginative. When I wasn't in school or doing chores I often came up with all kinds of games to play with myself and imaginary friends. That creative, unstructured play time allowed me to become comfortable by myself and very independent. I am also very social and enjoy the time I spend with family, friends and coworkers.

Divorce

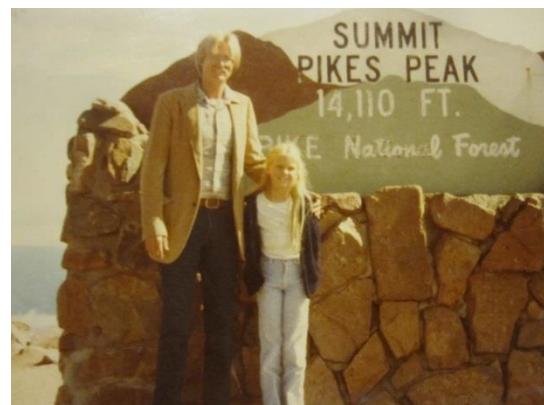
I'm really not quite sure why my parents married to be honest. They were and are so different from one another. In the end it didn't work. They were married 8 years and divorced when I was 7. They fought openly and bitterly and I always remember thinking that I never wanted to be in that position. But that IS indeed the position I would be in just 22 years later.

Despite the battle, I was lucky... I had two parents that both loved me very much and continued to fight over custody until the day I was able (according to the courts) make my own decision. Not all Dads would fight so hard to spend time with their daughter.

New Beginnings

When my parents divorced my Mom decided to go back to school. She joined a specialized two year program in Animal Behavior at a school in Moorpark, California. Against my Father's wishes she moved me 3 hours south.

My Father was so dedicated to seeing me he would drive six hours round-trip every other Friday night to pick me up and bring me back to the central coast – his “every other weekend” rights. Then he would make the same trip on Sunday night to return me back in time for Monday morning class. He did this without fail for 2 years! He would sometimes drive down just to see me on random Saturdays if he wasn't able to spend the entire weekend with me.

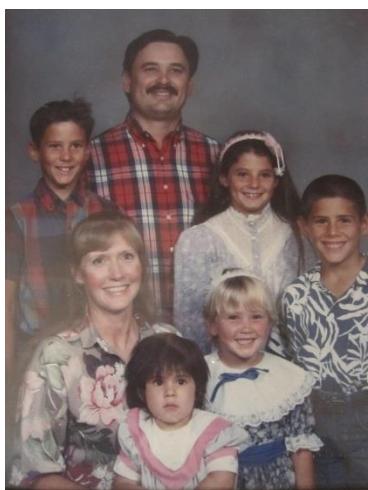


My Life in a Zoo

My Mom moved back to the Central Coast just before my 9th birthday. Due to her specialized training, she landed a job as the manager of the Atascadero Zoo. Every day after school (5th & 6th grade) I would walk to the zoo and spend the afternoon with my Mom there. It was like living in a dream! I helped out with small chores and got to see the most amazing things!

No one would believe me now, so thank god I have pictures, but we actually had an opportunity to take care of two baby tigers in our home for about a month. The mother tiger rejected her two cubs at birth (probably because she was pissed that she was in captivity) so my Mom, as the manager, had to take them home and bottle feed them. You can imagine the conversation in school, "So do you have dogs/cats/fish?" "Yes, and I also have two baby tigers!"

Shortly after moving to Atascadero, my Mom met my now step-Father, Steve, and got married. Ironically my Dad followed suite shortly thereafter. I was blessed, as both my step-parents (Steve & Susan) were and are wonderful people. And I believe perfect for my parents. I vividly remember feeling happy for each of my parents when they found their true love. They both remain married to their second spouses today.



The More the Merrier!

Although I grew up as an only child for the first 9 years of my life, that all was about to change! Susan, my new step-Mom, had two sons around my age. Peter was just three weeks older than me and Matt was two years younger. It was a bit awkward having to learn a new way of living and sharing but we got through it.

Not long after getting remarried, both my parents decide to have a second child. My Dad and Susan had John, my half-brother, when I was just 11 and my Mom and Steve had Hannah just one year later. In a silly way, it seemed as if they were in competition with each other!

Steve wanted more children and my Mom had always wanted to adopt (something she and my Father fought bitterly over). So shortly after having Hannah, my Mom brought home a sibling group of 3 foster children, which she later adopted. She then adopted one other child from a woman in her church whose daughter was not able to raise "Selma", as my Mom named her.

During this time my Father and step-mom had also had a child, John Hanson – named after my Grandfather. I was complete with a family of 8 brothers and sisters!

So, in a short few years I went from being an only child to having eight brother and sisters!

Lessons Learned

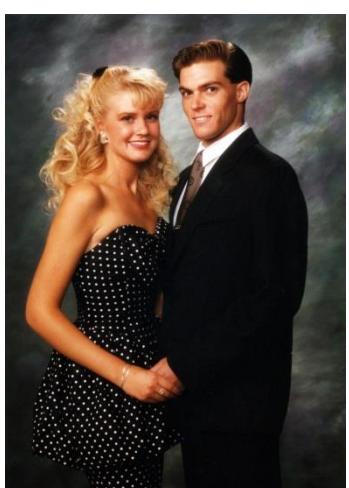
I feel like everything I learned as a child and young adult had led me to the point where I am now and I owe a lot to both of my parents.



Lessons learned from my Mom – My Mom taught me to follow my intuition and to see beauty in everything. She showed me the importance of self-expression is important and proved that you could be elegant even in overalls.

Lessons learned from my Dad – My Dad taught me the importance of hard work, determination and confidence. He showed me that building anything from businesses to relationships, requires patience and follow-through.

By showing me that they loved me unconditionally, my parents instilled me with a strong sense of self and by making me work for everything I received, I became confident in my abilities rather than developing sense of entitlement. This combination has given me a true sense of self-worth which has gotten me through some extremely difficult times.



College Bound?

Through working in my Father's business I found that I had a knack for sales and creativity. The logic of business just clicked with me from an early age. While I was involved in my high school's business club, DECA, I wasn't a dedicated student. In fact I got mostly C's. Apparently I was far too interested in boys than class! One of those boys was Ryan Ripley, a handsome boy 4 years older than me. He worked for the local fire department and lived just down the street. We dated my junior and senior year. We broke up right after High School, as I felt I needed to experience other relationships. I just seemed to have something for fire trucks...

Since my parents never received their bachelor's degrees there wasn't a strong push for me to go to college. My Dad hated school; he found it impractical and a waste of time, so he gave me a choice. He made it clear that he would pay for college or I could take the same pot of money and use it to start my own business or put a down payment on a home. Since I realized I wasn't wise enough to invest in a home or start my own business, I decided I'd better continue my education.

Since my GPA wasn't adequate to get into a decent college, I decided to go to the local community college for two years with the goal of transferring to a four-year school. I thrived in the new environment and I was able to get my grades up and focus in on the subjects I enjoyed. With a better GPA I was accepted to private school – University of San Diego – and ended up graduating with honors.

Exploring the World

One of my weakest subjects was foreign language. I couldn't pass Spanish to save my life! Somehow I got around it in High School, but the college requirement was looming. I somehow convinced my Dad to allow me to do my language requirement in Spain, through a study abroad program (I promised to pay him back, which I did). I immersed myself in Spanish culture for two months and then traveled around Western Europe for a month after. I was lucky enough to meet a travel companion while taking classes in Spain since I didn't know a single person when I arrived. Shawna and I traveled through Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and France together for three weeks. She had to return home and I was on my own, in Europe, for one final week. I have to say that week was one of my defining Moments. I was 20 years old, sleeping on trains, exploring cities alone and no one in the world knew where I was. It was liberating!



Run Felena, Run!

Along the way I gained a passion for running. It's funny, because while I played tennis all four years of High School, I had always hated running! I guess it came out of necessity, as I wasn't playing sports in college and needed a way to stay in shape. I enjoyed it so much that ended up running two marathons in college. I wasn't the fastest runner and averaged a 10 minute miles in training, but I finished each marathon in just 3 hours and 45 minutes! I guess it was adrenaline and my competitive spirit coming out!

Close-to-Death Experience

Although I wanted to get into Marketing, I took a job right out of school in Sales. It was a simple decision, working in sales meant I was earning more money and had more opportunities. I moved to Los Angeles and took an inside sales position for a large dental company. Less, than a year later I moved to another sales job in the equally exciting industry of commercial office furniture!

I was in that position for just a few months when I took a weekend trip back to San Diego to visit some friends. Nothing could prepare me for what was about to happen.

It was May 6th, 1996 at about 9pm - I was exiting the freeway in Ocean Beach (via a bit of a blind intersection). A fire truck ran the red light at about 40 miles per hour and collided with my small Jetta. No air bag, no lap belt, nothing. At 22 years old I came literally inches away from losing my life. It took the emergency crew well over an hour to pull the fire truck off my car with a crane and then use the Jaws of Life to pry me out. I was conscious, but in shock, the entire time. I broke well over 20 bones in my arms, legs, and face... including my clavicle and pelvic bone. The doctors told my Father I would likely never run again.



It was a long road to recovery; I went through dozens of surgeries, some immediately, some in the following years. I still have residual challenges, as I have enough titanium in my body to build a small robot. I was in the hospital over a month and confined to a wheel chair for several months following. I moved back to Arroyo Grande to live with my family. My sweet boyfriend from San Diego took a leave from UCLA Art School to help take me to all my physical therapy appointments that summer.

Lesson Learned

There are so many things one learns from an experience like this. The accident gave me, my family, and everyone around me an incredible perspective on life. I believed that because I survived it, I must have been put on this earth to do something important.

I also learned very early on that none of us know when our last day on this earth might be and we must live each day as if it was our last!

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. Steve Jobs



Back to Los Angeles

It was a full six months until I returned to Los Angeles and was able to get back to work with the furniture company. Within a short period of time I was promoted to outside sales, which I enjoyed tremendously. That job was really my first taste of collaboration and relationship building.

About a year later I had my first opportunity to move into marketing with a high tech recruiting firm in Torrance. I was elated! My first marketing job!

Meanwhile on the personal side I married my boyfriend of 3 years, Brian, who had faithfully stayed by my side during my recovery process. It was remarkable for a twenty-one year-old man to have the wherewithal to stay with me through my recovery. I can tell you I wasn't pretty – I pretty much looked like a squashed blueberry for a while.

Even though my friends vividly remember me saying "I don't think I want to settle down" and that International Business was my main goal, I felt indebted to Brian and obligated to say yes when he asked me to marry him a little over a year after I recovered. I remember thinking that we were young but I couldn't see not marrying him after he stood by me through thick and thin! We married in September 1998.



First Layoff

I was shocked to find out that only 9 months after landing my first real job in marketing that the company was sold and the majority of the staff was going to be laid off. I was devastated. I was recently married and now supporting my artistic husband in his ventures to launch a surf board manufacturing and apparel company. I needed to find a new gig quickly.

After repainting every inch of our house (remember Hansons don't sit still) I landed a job at a full-service marketing agency in Redondo Beach in less than two months. We did work for clients such as DIRECTV Sports, Sun America, Fox News Channel, and Epson. My job grew into a role where I helped manage collaboration projects between companies like DIRECTV Sports and large retail merchandisers.

As if I wasn't busy enough, I decided to go back to school a few nights a week to get my MBA. Unfortunately the marketing agency was having problems (two partners who fought relentlessly) and I was laid off again in 2000. I took the opportunity to finish my MBA by cramming 22 units in one semester before moving back to San Diego in 2001. I was OVER Los Angeles!

Fresh Start

Because of the recent burst of the tech bubble, my job prospects were bleak. We ended up settling in an artistic area of San Diego (North Park) and I eventually found a job as Director of Marketing (after a short stint working for the Mexican Mafia -- I'll save that for another story) with a high tech company where again my role was to manage collaborative projects with large media companies such as CNN, USA Today, and LA Times. I definitely felt like I was in over my head at the time but I somehow had the confidence to take the "fake it till you make it" attitude. An attitude I have routinely applied throughout my career. My other mantra is "say yes and Google it"!

The founding team ended up selling the company to America Online in 2003, which meant I was again out of a job... my 3rd layoff by age 29!

I had a couple options at this point. I could find another J-O-B (which to me seemed like a death-sentence) or create my own business. I'd been the family bread winner for five years and felt it was my turn to follow in my Father's footsteps! Plus, San Diego as a city is extremely supportive of small businesses and I felt that the possibility of success was just as high creating my own company as it would be going to work for another company that would be bought, sold, downsized, etc.

Entrepreneurship

With a solid background in marketing I launched my consulting practice in 2003. I named my business Perspective Marketing, as I felt I could help small businesses see issues from an objective angle. Over the eight year period my niche emerged in helping small service based companies grow through relationship marketing. Of course I took a huge pay cut - it took me several years to even get close to the salary I was earning in high-tech - but it was worth it. I had freedom and control of my destiny!

Part of the reason I got my MBA was because I eventually wanted to teach. I had imagined it was something I would do after I retired at 55 but when I took the opportunity to branch out on my own I thought I might try my hand at teaching sooner than later. Through a series of connections, Cal State University Dominguez Hills and Cal State University Long Beach offered me an adjunct teaching position in marketing for their online programs. Shortly after that I also landed a job teaching Entrepreneurship at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM), downtown San Diego. This gave me some stable income while I launched my business and I also found I LOVED it! I especially enjoyed teaching young women at FIDM!

I WILL Run Again

My Dad had gotten into running around the same time I did and later decided to run his first marathon. I thought this might be a good opportunity for me to see if I could complete another marathon. It had been almost 10 years since my car accident... I figured I would be OK. I'm proud to say both my Father and I completed the Rock-n-

Roll marathon! My time was nowhere near my college days but at least I could say I did it! See I proved those doctors wrong! It was however my last marathon. I am now satisfied with running half marathons!

At age 31, six years after marrying my college sweetheart, my husband and I split up. Simply put, we married too young and his eyes wandered... twice.

Lessons Learned

Surviving the accident and the end of my marriage taught me that I could recover from anything and that what doesn't kill you can truly make you stronger. Through each change, I learned that reinvention is an important part of life and being willing to redefine my personal goals and professional life was absolutely necessary for not only my survival but my success.

Starting my own business after the job losses helped me believe that I could control my own destiny.

Growing My Network

Shortly after I launched my business I realized I must start focusing on building connections and strategic alliances. Through this, I really learned how to "network".

In 2006 I met a talented attorney from Texas, Linda Lattimore, as she was in the first stages of launching a professional organization, Women's Global Network. WGN's mission was to build local business connections and help women in developing nations launch small businesses through microloans.

I was one of her first board members and just over a year later took over the leadership of the San Diego chapter, as she moved back to Texas for a job and to launch additional chapters. Running WGN not only gave me great leadership experience but also good visibility. I continued to expand my network and meet amazing business women throughout San Diego.

My eight-year affiliation with the Fashion Institute led me to launch a fashion networking organization and do several non-profit projects, including a venture with the San Diego Visual Arts Network called "Art Meets Fashion". This was a unique collaboration project pairing visual artists and fashion designers throughout San Diego. In addition to the artist/designer duo, each team was also comprised of a documenter (photographer or videographer) and educator. The goal was to document the creative process



between artist and designer and for the educator to take the learnings back into San Diego high schools and community colleges to inspire teens to get into the arts. The work was showcased at the San Diego Airport from March to September 2011 and at various galleries and boutiques in Central San Diego.

This continued to build my drive to collaborate!

Kids

A common question is “do you have children”? My smart-ass answer when I taught college was “yes, I have 30”... referencing my students at FIDM who were mostly young women between 17-20 years-old. It’s a fair question but one I’ve struggled a bit with. My “clock” has never ticked. While I like kids, I never felt the urge to have my own. This is despite my Father telling me on a daily basis that having children was the best decision of his life.

But this is a tough choice for a lot of driven women. Do you step off the success wheel to have a child? How will this change your life? Each woman needs to make her own decision but for me, the way I like to put it is, “I’m better to give my attention to many people vs. one or two”.

Incubating New Business Ideas

After leading WGN for two years, I had the opportunity to step into a temporary leadership position with Ladies Who Launch. I took over management of the local chapter in August 2009. This was an opportunity to work with a new group of entrepreneurial women and with a national organization that had fairly good brand recognition. I’ve really enjoyed leading the Incubator Intensive Workshops – which are part inspiration, education, and accountability between 6-8 female entrepreneurs.

I took the concept of collaboration to the next level when I joined forces with Michelle Bergquist, founder of Connected Women of Influence, to launch the Business Women’s Mega Mixer in 2010. This is a showcase of professional women’s organizations throughout San Diego County. The first event drew over 25 organizations, 500 women, and raised thousands of dollars for a local female-focused non-profit.



Lesson Learned

While I had leaned a tremendous amount through teaching, networking and building my business, I was starting to get burned out and with as social as I was, working at home was hard for me. And I was starting to get burned out wearing multiple hats. At one point I had 5 business cards and over a dozen email addresses!

As Michael Gerber describes in the “E-Myth” (Entrepreneurial Myth):

Everyone that starts a business is a technician that suffers from an Entrepreneurship seizure. Small businesses do not work the way intended because the technician only works in the business and cannot also have the foresight to work on the business at the same time.

I was pretty burned out and needed to create a business that was bigger than myself, something I could scale!

Where it all came together

Hera Hub really grew out of my need. I worked from home for eight years, and while it's great for the convenience, and is of course cost effective as a small service based business, it has its downfalls. It can be distracting and isolating working from home. The laundry and dishes nag at me, the dog whines, the doorbell rings, anything can take my attention away from what I NEED to be doing! Privacy and the desire to appear professional were also major concerns when I was working from home.

This day-time challenge was coupled with the struggle to find evening event space for my networking groups. Hotels and private rooms were always too expensive and community centers were closing left and right.

I was turned on to the concept of coworking in 2008, when I hosted a networking event at San Diego's first coworking space, the Hive Haus. I pondered the idea of opening my own space for a couple years before really diving in to do market research. I ended up visiting coworking spaces in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco in June of 2010 and started to look for spaces in late summer.

Challenges in Commercial Real Estate

The commercial real estate process was much more complex and challenging than I ever imagined. I had two strikes against me: a new business and a new concept - no one wanted to take a risk. I got patted on the head more than a few times from older men in this very traditional industry.

I spent 3 months negotiating my first deal directly with a building owner who was interested in the coworking model (without a broker). That blew up in the 11th hour when he decided to launch his own coworking space - after I'd shared my extensive business plan and all my financials. History repeated itself (although this time I was armed with a broker) when negotiating my second deal. We got all the way to the day I was to get a cashier's check for the deposit and first month's rent only just to have the building owner tell me, they found a better fit for the space.

I was devastated. I remember thinking that maybe it wasn't meant to be after all.

My third lease negotiation also got off to a rocky start. After submitting my proposal I found out the building was in escrow. After waiting three weeks for the new owner to respond, we finally got a chance to meet. Much to my delight the new owners knew about coworking and had visited the Hive Haus. They seemed to be interested.

We began the negotiation process on the ideal space, about 3,700 square feet, when they got a bid from a tenant in an adjacent suite who wanted the space. I thought I was doomed! The building owners came back with a suggestion to look at a suite in the adjacent building. The space was over 8,000 square feet, which they agreed could be split. With a little vision I sectioned off close to 5,000 square feet and put in a new proposal. It was a big risk, as it was almost twice the size of the prior two spaces.

Now, mind you... I had no clue about commercial construction and what was feasible. Luckily I didn't have to hire an expert because my long-time partner, Keith, is a contractor. He was able to advise me throughout the process, his expertise was a God-sent!

Ready, Fire, Aim

I had recently read a book by author Michael Masterson, which gave me the drive to try a different tactic. It was early April 2011 when I met Amy Mewborn, the recent franchisee for Xtend Barre (a popular form of Ballet-meets-Pilates). She overheard me lamenting about the commercial real estate industry at a networking event. She mentioned her newly launched location, not far from where I was looking, and invited me to take a look at a second dance studio she wasn't yet using.



I went the next day to look at the 700 square foot studio (which happened to boast dark brown hardwood floors and aqua walls – pretty much Hera Hub colors) and wrote her a check on the spot for a temporary lease. Keith amazingly rigged a ledge on one of the ballet bars, so we could run power and helped me buy and set up IKEA furniture in just one week! We even set up a make-shift meeting room in a storage space. We made it work!

I officially opened the “temporary” Hera Hub on tax day, April 15th 2011. Despite the mirrored walls and the intermittent sounds of women groaning through leg-lifts, I was able to create what I now call “spa-inspired”... complete with candles, fountains, and soft music. I opened our doors for four months to anyone who wanted to try out the shared workspace for free. I could start to see it come together!

Control

It's not a pretty word, yet it's the word I use. Another lesson gifted to me was that of the 2008 stock-market crash. My stock portfolio (like everyone else's) took about a 40% blow. While launching Hera Hub was a risk, I invested close to \$60,000 of my own money and borrowed an additional \$30,000 from my Father, I felt like I was at least “in control” of the outcome. I felt I had NO control leaving the money in mutual funds with companies I didn't even keep track of. Succeed or fail, at least I knew I was in control of my money!



Final Stretch

I continued the negotiation process while running the temporary space. I was elated when we finally came to an agreement. Despite the road blocks, my dream was becoming a reality!

We finished construction in early August and I officially opened the doors of the first Hera Hub on Monday, August 15, 2011. A full year after I started to look for space.

I truly feel everything I've done in my life led me up to the moment of launching Hera Hub. It is a natural extension of the collaboration I have fostered throughout my entire career. It has taken a lot of 80 hour work weeks, but I'm proud to say Hera Hub is a huge success! We grew to over 150 members in the first year and launched our second and third locations in San Diego County to respond to the demand. We now have three successful locations and are expanding globally through a franchise model.



My next goal (our vision) is to help over 20,000 women launch and grow their business through 200 locations globally over the next five years!

What is Hera Hub?

[Hera Hub](#) is a shared, flexible work and meeting space where entrepreneurial women can create and collaborate in a professional, productive, spa-like environment. The platform provides our members with connections to other business experts, access to educational workshops, and visibility within the community... thus giving them the support they need to be prosperous.

Beautiful, yet Functional, Coworking Space

Unlike other coworking spaces that tend to focus on recreating typical office settings, all of the Hera Hub locations were designed to benefit all five senses. Our coworking spaces focus on the five senses:

1. Sight – beautiful art, live plants, calming colors, friendly faces
2. Smell – aromatic candles that relax and invigorate
3. Sound – soft spa-like music and tranquil running water
4. Feel – variety of comfortable seating arrangements, including standing work stations
5. Taste – fresh brewed coffee, tea, spa water and snacks

Who Was Hera?

Significant thought process went into developing the name and logo. Hera, the Greek Goddess of women, was revered as being the only Goddess who accompanied a woman through every step of her life; blessing and protecting her family and financial security. Hera represents the fullness of life and affirms that women can use their wisdom in the pursuit of any goal they choose. How is it that the beautiful peacock was her symbol? Perhaps I already knew what my quest in life was when I was selling feathers at the grocery store.



Why Women?

I truly believe that women interact differently and are instinctively more collaborative in their approach to business. I felt it was important to create a space for female entrepreneurs that is not only beautiful, comfortable, and feminine but also very professional.

Many women running small businesses also have to juggle family life, and therefore feel an affinity with other women in the same situation. A supportive environment where women feel they easily relate to others helps get to that point in the relationship where they know, like, and trust the other person and are therefore more likely to ask for feedback or refer business.

Hera Hub Myths

- *These women are just building hobby businesses.* Our members are providing for their families and making a much larger economic impact. In fact, as of 2013 there are over 8.6 million women-owned businesses in the United States. Those are not hobbies!
- *There must be cattiness - how could 300 women get along so well?* When you encourage women to support each other and collaborate, there simply isn't the time or space for fighting or backbiting.
- *Or my favorite... "oh you must have pillow fights and girl talk all the time".* While we certainly enjoy each other's company, we are here to work. And we work HARD!

Recap: Lessons Learned

Looking back over the 40 years of my life, I can safely say that everything I experienced, the good and the bad, lead me to where I am today and will continue to propel me forward.

The Lessons Learned in Childhood

My childhood taught me to recognize and utilize the resources available to me, to work hard and try my best. From my Father I learned to be persistent, resilient and creative. My mother instilled the importance of presentation and trusting my gut.

The Lessons Learned in my Early Career

Although I didn't intend to start my career in sales, my childhood had taught me to jump on the opportunities as they presented themselves. My accident taught me to value my health and family and to live life to the fullest. Knowing that things can change in the blink of an eye makes me more mindful of using every day.

The Lessons Learned in my First business

Making the jump from being employed to being self-employed was unsettling but I knew pursuing my dream wasn't any more dangerous than relying on someone else's ability to provide me with a steady job. I also learned that in order to be my best, I couldn't say "yes" to every opportunity that presented itself. I needed to be deliberate in the choices I made and avoid becoming distracted by projects, objects or commitments that pulled me away from my long term goals.

The Lessons Learned at Hera Hub

Women are amazing business owners - we can take an idea and build a successful business model even if we are repeatedly told "no" and have to start in a small room with a wall full of mirrors.

Final Challenge

I have built this business--literally. Installing curtains, assembling furniture, putting in the final nail – I believe the extreme attention to detail (aesthetics and atmosphere) makes the space. I would stay up hours, making sure every inspirational wall-decal was placed in just the “right” spot.

One biggest challenge in franchising will be to ensure that I select the “right” women to build the Hera Hub platform internationally. I need to find women who have the same passion and attention to detail... women who want to build a strong community and support other women. Wish me luck!

Final Advice

Go Big or Go Home!

I encourage you to challenge yourself – set goals, work hard and show up for your business. There is no one there to tell you how to manage your time, when to say “yes” to certain tasks and when to say “no”, so you need to trust your gut and your abilities and when you are unsure, ask for help. Admitting uncertainty to a group of trusted advisors allows your colleagues to do the same and allows them to help you. Don’t be afraid to ask, the worst thing you hear is a “no” and I can guarantee that you will hear a lot of those as you grow your business.

Moving Forward

No matter what stage of your life or business you are in, being honest, sincere and reliable is an absolute necessity. Find something you love and do it well. Our lives are too short to spend them staying stagnant. I encourage you to keep growing - as I continue growing the Hera Hub brand and growing personally, I know there is more to learn and that this is just the beginning of something truly beautiful.

