

A woman with curly hair, wearing a white tank top and dark shorts, is running on a paved path in a park. She is captured in a dynamic pose, leaning forward with her arms pumping. In the background, there are trees and a multi-story building with many windows. The entire image has a greenish-yellow tint.

YOUR LIFE'S WORKSHOP presents:

Get Your Shit Together

10 Steps to survive and THRIVE in your first year in business

By Illana Burk

Get Your Shit Together: 10 Steps to survive and thrive in your first year in business



1. Be ready to learn. Everything. Banish, “That’s just not me,” and “I can’t _____,” from your vocabulary.

List 3 things you know you need to learn ASAP:

a.

b.

c.

Now list the corresponding ways in which you will tackle the learning process for each item:

a.

b.

c.

2. Seek guidance when you need it. Look for help and answers when you feel lost. No one has ever built a successful business without asking a boatload of questions of the people who forged the path before them.

** But respect the time and energy of those you seek help from. If they sell their advice, don't ever expect to get it for free. Asking for help is not a shortcut. Do your homework first. When in doubt, GOOGLE first, ask questions second.*

Who can you get help from right now?

- a.
- b.
- c.

This handy script should help...

Hi _____!

My name is _____. I am building a business that helps [who you serve] by offering them [how you help your people]. I have been reading your work and found [a specific reference to something they have done] incredibly useful. I know you are incredibly busy, but if you have a second, I have just one follow-up question for you: [specific and singular question – meaning you really only get to ask ONE thing, and it should be advice-based, not asking-them-for-promotion-based]?

I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to read this. Your work has meant a lot to me and I hope that at some point I can return the favor.

Thanks!

- [Your Name, email address, website url, and social media links]

3. Decide what you're building long-term. You can build self-employment, a business, or a company. Pick one.

Answer below with which one you're building and why:

4. Use the tools available. Find out what people in your industry use and use what's available. From scheduling software to website platforms to bookkeeping, invest in what works for successful people and embrace industry standards.

Future-you will thank current-you for it when you don't have to reinvent every system you have because your spit-'n-duct-tape way made a huge mess.

Your first year is not the time to reinvent the wheel.

What are the top three tools people in your business use?

a.

b.

c.

If you don't have all three right now, what's your plan to acquire them?

5. Focus on your process and draw a line in the sand around it. No matter what anyone says, the only way to be successful is to experiment with how you do your best work.

When you figure out the ways in which you get the best results, frame every offer around that.

Not everyone is made for public speaking or course-leading, or blogging, or one-on-one work. Learn what works by trying as many options as possible.

When something flies, stick with that.

What is your favorite and most effective delivery method for your message? Are you a great writer? Public speaker? Interviewer? One-on-one wizard? What part of your work lights you up the MOST?

6. Embrace change. And risk. And terror. Your first year will have all of these things in spades. Teach yourself to love the ride or get out now.

What are you NOT willing to risk?

What are you willing to risk and/or get painfully comfortable with to achieve success in your new endeavor?

7. Do your thing.

And don't worry about other people's things.

Try to ignore what other people in your industry are doing as much as you possibly can in your first year. Mimicry is seductive and hard to shake.

Look outside your industry for inspiration. If you're a life coach, look at designers. If you're a designer, look at photographers. If you're a marketer, look at coaches, etc... You might even learn something in the process and you will be less-inclined to want to slit your wrists while drooling all over the success of others who do what you do. Call it a home remedy for Comparisonitis.

Name three industries outside your own where you can seek inspiration:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Now, go find out who does great work in those industries and subscribe to one leader in each area's email list. Commit to reading them, and only them, for one month.

8. Ask excellent questions. Every new business owner scrambles to connect with more experienced business owners. Forge relationships. Connect! Connect! Connect! But that doesn't mean you should mine experienced people for information. When you ask them a question, it should feel as if you are giving them a gift. The process of thinking about their answer should inspire and delight them. Asking how and what they did to get to where they are is wildly disrespectful of their time. Asking them about their dream for their business is not.

Practice. Write three questions below [simple enough right?]. Here's the kicker: There are three rules...

Rule 1: None of them can be self-serving in any way.

Rule 2: They must all be devoid of judgments and assumptions.

Rule 3: They must all aspire to deepen the thinking of the person you are questioning.

Example: What do you consider to be the most profoundly honest part of your book?

Your questions:

a.

b.

c.

9. Invest in deep knowledge and clarity.

Networking does you no good if you don't know what you're doing yet. If you have a bit of cash to spend, spend it on someone or something that helps you get crystal clear on what you do, how you do it, who you do it for, and most importantly... **WHY** you're doing it.

List three ways in which you can invest in clarity right now [*Hint: Investment is not always about money, but it obviously can be.*]

10. Value your voice. If you have something to say, say it. Don't worry about whether it's popular. Ignore the response. You are brilliant. And you should tell the whole wide world. Be brave in your message and the audience will follow.

What are you dying to say, but are a little bit afraid to?

Say it here: