

TRANSCRIPT:

Ep 070: Running a Food Service Company During COVID, Learnings from Building Two 7 Figure Businesses, and Ways to Avoid Burnout

Intro Clip, Molly Fienning: The biggest thing in entrepreneurship is knowing it's a marathon, not a sprint. And it's not about one decision you're making. There's not one choice where you're like, this is a successful company. And this is a failure company. It is millions of decisions, millions of small decisions day by day, and it's a commitment to persevere. And so you're gonna, you're gonna hit a wall, you're gonna hit a fork in the road, you're gonna hit a fire. It's really the commitment. Saying, I'm not giving up on this.

Shannan Monson: Welcome to CEO school. We're your hosts Suneera Madhani and Shannan Monson, and we believe that you deserve to have it all. Less than 2% of female founders ever break 1 million in revenue, and we're on a mission to change that. Each week, you'll learn from incredible mentors who have made it to the 2% Club, as well as women well on their way sharing how they defied the odds so that you can do it to your real business now, class is officially in session.

Shannan Monson: Welcome today to today's episode, we're so excited for you. We have Molly, the co-founder and CEO of Red Clay Hot Sauce, a modern Southern hot sauce and hot honey company based out of Charleston Southern girl like myself, so I'm very excited to have her on the show. She was also the co-founder and co CEO of Babiators, which, if you haven't heard of them, was one of Forbes 100 most promising companies and the leading sunglasses brand for babies and kids with over, wait for it, for three and a half million pairs sold. She's also a Harvard grad, incredibly smart business owner, woman, mothers, and we're so excited to have her on the podcast today. Molly, thanks for coming on.

Molly Fienning: Thanks for having me.

Shannan Monson: Okay, I want to just dive right in because you're running a food service company in the middle of COVID. So how are you surviving? What has that been? Like? What advice do you have for all of us in the middle of this?

Molly Fienning: It has definitely been a hard year but a really rewarding year, despite or because of sort of the hard work that the team and I really kind of committed to putting in. So Red Clay, just a little context is first and foremost a restaurant hot sauce. My partner is a chef, at some of the best had worked at some of the best restaurants here in Charleston, the ordinary neons crafted our original sauce as a sauce to pair with oysters at a bar here in town. And so we really built sort of that first couple years as a local kind of cult restaurant, hot sauce. We're all the right restaurant tables sort of supported Charleston, and we grew in the f&b food and beverage community. And I stepped in as CEO about two years ago, was co founder and kind of still in the day to day in Babiators. But I stepped in a CEO to really sort of take it beyond that kind of local cultural students love sauce to a national stage. And, you know, share it on, you

know, on grocery shelves and share it with boutiques and push direct to consumer, which is sort of my background and wheelhouse. But that said food service was still a good, you know, 30% of our gross revenue last year. And so we're on a number of restaurant tables. And so when restaurants closed in March, and we had, you know, a forecasted million dollar year. And 30% of it was going to be from restaurants who were closed, you know, and couldn't even, you know, open open for any service for a few months, we really had to kind of step back and reevaluate and pivot and so my head of sales and I first of all cut about \$30,000 of expenses monthly out of the bill, we paused a lot of things we didn't need right away. And we were really sort of lean any, you know, sort of did a lean mean team. And you know, thought about cash and our runway of cash knowing we didn't know where sales were going. And then after that we lean hard into direct to consumer and used all the money we were going to put into samples for food service into gifting for influencers and knowing a lot of these celebrities and chefs are now sitting at home, quarantined cooking. We started gifting a bunch of sauce all over the place. And one of the packages was to Jenna Bush Hager. And a few days after she received the gift package, I'm on the phone with my head of sales bill Schafer, and he's like, he keeps getting ping, ping, ping on his phone, ping, ping, ping and I'm like what's happening on your phone? Like, what I can't hear you and he's like, there are 800 people on our site right now. And he's like, I was like that's the only way that's possible is television. And so I was like what TV we could we be on right now. Oh my gosh, Jenna Bush just got her samples like two days ago, Ron to my television put on the Today Show. It's a commercial. I want to Oh no, I think I missed it. And a customer sent the video. But Jenna Bush got up there and held two bottles on the zoom with COVID and was like, This is getting me through quarantine. You know, Red Clay is this new product I love. And that moment for me pivoted our 2020 to oh my gosh, are we going to die too? Oh my gosh, we're gonna die because we can't keep up with or, you know, we're out of stock or selling like crazy. And we were able to meet our million dollar goal for the year because of that pivot to direct to consumer.

Shannan Monson: I think that's so smart. And we've had a couple of guests on the show that have said similar things that you had this month because crisis moment. And the first thing that you did was okay, figure out our cash flow, like how are we going to what's our runway? How are we going to make this work? And how can we run as lean as possible? And then from there, you're really stepping into what Where are people going to be? They're not going to be in restaurants? How can we meet them where they are in their homes and really moving into influencer marketing. And of course it had phenomenal results for you. I think that's really exciting and also opens up like probably a whole new part of your business that maybe wouldn't have been there before. Which is pretty cool. Okay, let's back up because I you're telling the story about Red Clay hot sauce, and I'm imagining where you just eating at a restaurant and you thought this is the best hot sauce ever. This is my new business partner like how did this, how did this come? How did you come to be the CEO of this?

Molly Fienning: So with I literally you know Babiators was my first product business and it's a 10 year old company. My husband and I started with another couple from college and my husband is an aviator for the Marine Corps and we came up with the concept Babiators and, and it, you know, inspired by it, he actually came up with the name and I had been doing that

and really sort of built my experience in kind of consumer packaged goods. For that point, probably six or seven years. Had Fox our son who's now five was pregnant with him. And all I wanted during that pregnancy was martinis and oysters. Sounds like what are you craving? I'm like vodka can have it. But so our first day out after we had Fox, Ted took me to our favorite oyster bar in town ordinary, and I ordered oysters and I got my Martini and my husband, the bartender asked me if I wanted hot sauce without oysters was like no, not really hot sauce person. Ironic in retrospect, now that I'm off, I'll see you. But he said, No, this is really different. Our chef makes it, he barrel ages it in his garage. It's delicious. It's perfectly paired for oysters. It's not too hot, he sold me on it, I tried it. And I turned to Ted and I was like, this is the best thing I've ever had. And I don't even like hot sauces. So I was like, you have to meet this man. So he went back in the kitchen and met Geoff gave him this card and said, You know if you ever want to bottle this call us. And about two weeks later, he called us and we gave him a small amount of capital just to get started. And we were silent Equity Partners, very hands off, he would check in with us sort of like how do I incorporate or how do I trademark or who's an accountant like, and we took a little sliver of the company and then call it three or four years Red Clay kind of had built itself into this beautiful artisan, local, well loved cold sauce, and it sort of was I would say plateauing at about probably 70,000 in revenue for a year to that point. And

Shannan Monson: It was you know, saturating the market with the current market, right?

Molly Fienning: Yeah, it kind of had built a little bit of like a love to Charleston local, good, but wasn't really doing anything kind of bigger than that. And Geoff, you know, had a day job and it really wasn't his, you know, he was doing where he could but I had read an art, you know, Babiatore was at that point eight years old, my team was running with it. And I didn't want to be that CEO that was like over their shoulder. Like, what's the Instagram caption today? You know, what's going on is that that's not fun for anybody. And so realized I needed some I like baby businesses. I like that kind of what's our logo? What's our color palette, who's our consumer, what's our sales channel, and not optimization like eight years and about margins and how to make it slightly better. That's deep at D energizes me. But so I was missing the early days of a business and had read an article about sir Kensington's Ketchup and how it built it, you know, it differentiated itself in the hot in the ketchup space as thoughtfully crafted higher quality ingredients, millennial consumer, well branded. And it's sold to Unilever for something like 100 \$40 million on 17 20 million in revenue. And I was like, This is what Red Clay is in hot sauce, we are all these things, we could do this, we can take it and sell it and put it on a platter for one of these bigger entities to to really make it a household name. And that was really exciting for me. And so I drove up to where Geoff was living at the time. And I said, Let's take this national and he said, Great, I want to make the sauce. If you want to step in and do the business, take a little more ownership, the CEO would love it. And so I did that two years ago on the condition he lent me relabel and redid the site, because I'm very big into branding, and so wanted to make sure that branding was where we wanted to be. We relaunched in October, drove up to Fresh Market headquarters in November and pitch them. They said yes to a full store rollout. That was our full grocery rollout in six months later, and then we pitch Whole Foods and they picked us up in two regions. And then this past weekend, we actually launched all doors in public so 1200 doors Republic. So in the past two years, we've definitely we've grown 300% year over year, two years

running, and reclocking another 300% growth are about three and a half million for the year this year and gross revenue. So this train that's that's leaving the station, which is very exciting.

Shannan Monson: There's so many things I love about the story now. I mean, you You are a brand new mom, and we have a lot of women that listen to this show. And you don't eat say that you don't even like hot sauce. Like this is not something that you were born but you know, you know, I think a lot of times we kind of feel like it's too late or you know, maybe I had my one hit wonder maybe I can't, you know start another business successfully. And what would that look like you're in a place you tell the waiter you don't even like hot sauce to know being the CEO of a nationally recognized brand. It's on today's show and has all the success I think there's so so many stories in there for us that everything is learnable. Right and everything that I'm sure you're probably an expert, I'm guessing you're an expert now in even like recipe and formulation, and you were able to take all these lessons you learned from beta eight or some of the first company and apply them to also a product based business. But let's be clear here, I mean, physical products, fashion products and foodservice and very different worlds, but you had enough like lessons and learns that you're able to apply and learn this new thing. I think that for someone listening is really exciting to know that you can know nothing about something and turn it into an incredibly successful company. So what would you say are, you know, now you've done this twice very successfully, what are the three biggest learnings in that first, zero to seven figures starting a company?

Molly Fienning: Mm hmm. So I completely agree with you, you know, children's retail and food and beverage are like a my day specifically grocery, they, you know, the way it functions, the way you order POS distribution, its grocery is its own complete animal. And so it was a huge new learning curve for me. And then also, in addition to that, I was co CEO of Babyiators with my three other partners. And so I had a sounding board, where I could first of all, lean on them to actually, you know, have like, the other partner was the CFO, the other partner was the CFO. So, you know, where's my ops chain? Where's my, my, my forecast, it was all done. And we would kind of come together and, and huddle. And with Red Clay, Geoff, really very much owns the production and the pallet, you know, it's his bosses. Yes. But like, the, the business side is, is, you know, I certainly, you know, ping him and ask him questions, but making kind of all the details and decisions on my side. And that not having, okay, who am I? Where's my house? So no, no, kind of the the, the climbing the mountain on your own was a huge learning lesson for me, and knowing I can and building the confidence that I can do that was exciting. But to answer your question on the zero to seven figures, I think, first of all, knowing that you don't know, you know, what you don't know, and accepting that and embracing that and is totally fine. And part of the job and, you know, a key sort of a key step of self awareness to say, Okay, I am, I am new with this. How do I learn it? Who do I talk to? How can I get a mentor? How can I get peers who are already doing it in this space? How can I build a board of advisors for my business? For people who've done this before? And can help me? How do I, what books should I be reading, you know, I don't watch television anymore, you know, but I'd take the time to kind of learn about, about the businesses through through stories, or conversations, or capital, or podcasts, or whatever it is. So you know, accepting that you're a novice and kind of striving to learn, and the fact that you're always learning. But number two, I would say, you know, for me,

I've learned that the biggest thing in entrepreneurship is, is knowing it's a marathon, not a sprint. And it's not about one decision you're making, there's not one choice where you're like, this is a successful company. And this is a failure company, it is millions of decisions, millions of small decisions day by day, and it's a commitment to persevere. And so you're gonna, you're going to hit a wall, you're going to hit a fork in the road, you're going to hit a fire, and it is that commitment to say, Okay, I can do this. And the more you do, the more steps you kind of take, and the more fires you put out, the more comfortable you are with those. But I think it's really the commitment to say, I'm not giving up on this. And I think a lot of people are deterred by failure or deterred by those obstacles and give up or they they burn out. And so I think the third thing I would say, my third learning would be balance and some kind of time away so that you prevent burnout. You know, we as women are so all encompassing of just like, I'm going to throw myself in and give it all, give it all you give it you give too much. You know, you start to resent the business or hate it or you're tired or you're just like, you know, screw it, I'm done. This is too much. And I think if you really consistently make time I remember one of my I went to like a CEO session once and that he was a professional CEO coach and he says I like to treat my CEOs like they're, they're trained, you know, Olympic athletes, how would How would an athlete take care of themselves, sleep, nutrition, time away, recreation, you know, sort of meditation, manifestation visualization, what are what are the tools techniques, if you view yourself like an elite athlete, how to lead the athletes take care of their body or their their work or their or their habits and what I've learned is so Have a little bit every day and you don't you don't stay up all night till five in the morning to finish something because then you're wrecked for three days, you know, sort of honor your boundaries, give yourself time to come back refreshed with new inspiration to prevent so that you can get to that million dollar marker and you can. It's just a matter of kind of time and, and releasing yourself of deadlines. I had a friend say to me, I was like, Oh my gosh, what if we don't make our million dollar? What if we make our million dollar goal? You know, it's like, oh my gosh, he's like, so can you make a million dollars a year after? Like, only you are putting that deadline on yourself? And I was like, Yes. It's so true. I did. And who cares if we make a million dollars this year, next year, but like, we're gonna do it?

Shannan Monson: That's really good. Really good advice. I mean, there's so many things I want to I'd like taking notes because I want to ask you so many questions. Okay. The first thing you said is kind of finding people that have done it before you finding that board of advisors. And I know when you were at Babiators, you actually had a connection with somebody at Warby Parker, and you mentioned learning a lot about the sunglasses business from them. So how do we go about in a new business? You're in those baby stages? How do you find the right people and kind of create that support network?

Molly Fianning: I think, so with the word, the example that was a college friend. And so I think, you know, first of all, go into the people who know you already and love you, whether that's your college network, or if you have grad school, grad school in our High School Network, or family and friends, or formal former work networks, you know, used to work previously. And so I think that's where you can start and you just sort of send a mass email or a one on one email saying, Listen, I'm starting this business, in this new category. And I want to learn about is that Do you know anybody who knows it and sort of start with people who know you and trust you and are

willing to kind of go that extra mile for you, and they might have a good connection. And then the Warby case, you know, my husband was, was a college roommate of one of the founders. And so he sat down with us and gave us some tips on launching, when we launch Babiatiors, I think the next step would be you know, LinkedIn or Instagram, I feel like you know, people are, you can't reach out to the like people that have millions and millions of followers because they just get bombarded. But who are the who are the knowledgeable people that are maybe one or two levels ahead of you one or two steps ahead of you, and have, you know, the expertise without the extremely large audience, because the larger audience, they're going to be drowned down in comments, but the expert, the smaller person who's on her way to become that might be willing to kind of jump on the phone with your 15 minutes or on a zoom call or an email thread. And I also think my biggest thing with the mentor thing, because I get asked this a lot is, is is you asking someone to formally be your mentor is really overwhelming for the person, because you're like, what does that mean? My bandwidth is already zero, I can't commit to anything. I'm so sorry. So you don't want to go in and say, will you help me forever? You know what I mean? But I think saying, Listen, I have one question 15 minutes of your time, you know, and, and honoring that 15 minutes and say, and sort of really be very specific about what help you need. And then I and then I think, or even keeping it to email or keeping it to DMS and saying, Oh, yeah, I saw that you make these beautiful boxes for your hot sauce. Who's your favorite box maker? Do you mind sending me a contact with your corrugated factory? And I would say, Sure, I love that. And here you go. And it's a very easy thing for me to check off and to feel like I was helpful. But if it's saying, will you be my mentor and my business as I scale for the next 10 years? I can't commit to that, you know, and so I think knowing, knowing to be really deliberate about who you're asking, and what you're asking so that it doesn't have to get the reply, basically,

Shannan Monson: I love that. I think people do do want to help, but you have to be thinking about where they're at. And you're making it so easy. You're saying, Okay, come with a specific question, come with a specific timeframe, you know, have no agenda, right. It's not that I want you to be my mentor for the next 10 years. I just want you answer this question for me. And I think that people are are actually very willing to ask when you're respectful of them to answer if you're respectful of their time. Okay. The second thing you talked about was not giving up. And that is a long game. When you're in those moments, because we all have them where you do want to quit and throw in the towel, and maybe find find a new project, something else to work on. What advice would you give to someone in that moment?

Molly Fienning: I would say take some time away before you make the decision. So I think you know, if you're feeling like I'm burning out, I want to quit. I think first of all, giving yourself a break. take a vacation, either a solo vacation, a girlfriend's vacation, a family vacation. If you can't take a vacation. Go for a walk, get a massage, turn off the computer, turn off your email for a couple days and step away to get some clarity. And then once you have a little clarity and time away, I would I would recommend journaling about what it is that is burning you out? And is it a specific part of the business that you're in the weeds on that you shouldn't be in? That is that, could that be solved with a new hire? Is it the category itself, and you're just you're like, you know, I hate commercial real estate, I'm done with commercial real estate, real estate, it's just

not my not my bag, like, you know, in sort of, that's harder to solve without getting out of the business, or, you know, thinking about, you know, kind of what it is that's burning you out, or is it just like not having boundaries, like, I've been working 18 hour days for months, and I, and I'm exhausted, and I don't see my kids, and I don't see my husband, and I don't see girlfriends and I want to, but if I worked eight hours a day on it, and I got to do all those things, I would actually still love it. And so I think figuring out what it is that you're burning out on and is it solvable? And then solve it if it is like hire somebody, put boundaries in place, give yourself the space to see your friends or your family or your your, your you know, your workout class that you love or take up a hobby or whatever that is. But if it's the bigger question of the business model isn't working, and I'm hitting myself head against the wall for no reason it's not selling, or I really don't enjoy the category. Like, you know, I own a casino and I feel conflicted about owning a casino. Like I think you know, then you kind of need to evaluate your exit and what the strategy is, and you know how you move through it over time. Because your point in the beginning about you know, I was a baby in Arizona and hot sauce. We live in a world where we're not joining IBM at 22 and retiring from IBM and 77 anymore, we are in a world where we are going to have three or four or five careers. And that's beautiful. And there's nothing wrong with saying, I learned this lesson from this business. And I'm going to do something different in my next one and shutting it down. That's not a failure, that is a growth experience. And so I don't think you should also just, again, I think you don't want to go down with the ship for no reason.

Shannan Monson: I want everyone to pause and re-listen. And there have been so many golden nuggets that you've said, and I just feel like I feel poured into as an entrepreneur. So I'm really excited. I think that we are living in a time where we can question what the norm has been. And there's no reason we can't have three or four or five different businesses or have a corporate career and two different side hustles. And we really get to create what we want that to look like. I think journaling can be really powerful to get clear on what does success look like for me? Where do I want to be and what's not aligned in my life? Something that came up for me while you're talking? entrepreneurs are incredible problem solvers. There's not one thing you've said to me that it wasn't okay, here's the problem, how do we solve it? And so there's always a solution and it's just getting creative about finding it. And on that note, question we have to ask what was one of the biggest obstacles in growing either business I'm open to any of your entrepreneurial journeys Babiatiors or Red Clay and what did you do to get over that? What was it like?

Molly Fienning: Yeah, I love this question. Because that's basically entrepreneurship is just obstacles. It's like what's the obstacle today? How do I solve it? What's the obstacle tomorrow How do I zone and commitment again to persevere through that over the years um, but so I feel like I like there's a story you know what makes Red Clay different than a lot of the other hot sauces out on the shelf or all the other hot sauces on the shelf is that we cold pressed, and so most hot sauces you buy peppers, you boil the peppers you add kind of flavor or some kind of the ingredient mix and then bottle and you're done. And for us my partner being the chef and coming at it from like a chef-y mindset he's like well in Spain, they cold pressed their olive oil and it's the most beautiful output of that first batch extra virgin olive oil. And so we he wanted to honor the pepper in the same way that Spanish people or you know, a lot of you know Italy

whatever it you know honor the olive and so we cold pressed and you literally use the equipment like sort of you wake up fresh pressed juice. And so when we were making this when I stepped into CEO Geoff was still handmaking in a small factory in Florence, South Carolina all of our sauce we pitch Whole Foods and and they said yes and so now we have this big order coming out

Shannan Monson: Wait, I want to pause you because if you don't have a food service background, he's okay a piece and pressing a batch how many bottles Can he make by himself in a day? I'm guessing

Molly Fienning: We had one bottling line we had one automated line so he was able to like actually automate the bottling, but he was hand counting the peppers. You know, I want to say hand labeling, I think we had an automatic label, probably not I mean, who knows, this is his expertise, I would say like, you know, a couple cases, I mean, a couple of a couple 1000 units.

Shannan Monson: And then the whole foods order, I have to

Molly Fienning: Like hundreds of 1000s.

Shannan Monson: So you have to figure out like, I know, food services in my background. And so I'm thinking you have to figure out how to completely redo the production process and almost overnight, right, like how fast of a turnover was this? When was Whole Foods expecting the first delivery? How did you deal with that?

Molly Fienning: So the one of the nice things about grocery is nice one of the quirks but also this work to our advantage is they have a typically a category review schedule that they honor pretty deliberately. So you'll say, Okay, once, once a year, the they'll reset the shelf on the hot sauce out. And so you, you know, they're reviewing all the sauces for one week period, probably nine months in advance, and they tell you six months in advance that you know, the tummy October that we're resetting for April 1 and you've been accepted. And the purchase order is going to arrive in January you need to deliver by March and will be on the show. And so we did have that six month window thankfully, to prepare it. So we started calling all the common factors knowing that this was a huge obstacle we couldn't service Whole Foods the way we were currently doing it. So hands on, and we called all the hot sauce companies in the country, they all heated they didn't cool, sort of post World War Two method condiment making of like boil and bottle. And we refuse to give that up because that keeps our plant enzymes alive makes it a healthy product. We don't add sugar, it's raw, it's cold. It's it's like it's alive sort of probiotic as a result through our fermentation process. And the flavor is more pure. And that's the biggest thing with my chef partner is like brightness of the flavor complexity of the flavor doesn't dull and make a one note condiment. And so we wouldn't we wouldn't sacrifice that. And so, literally, I'm like, Oh my gosh, we're gonna be up all night. So my head of the time, who's this amazing woman was like, we're not thinking outside the box. Who else cold presses. And so we started calling juicers and kombucha factories, and we found a juice kombucha place that knows how to ferment. It has the cold, cold press equipment in Buffalo, New York. And we build

our production line up there. And so we're the only hot sauce brand that's made at a line at a kombucha factory, purely because we weren't willing to sacrifice that process of what makes us unique. So that was a huge obstacle that we had to really get creative to figure out how to solve that took months of hard work and like banging our head against the wall.

Shannan Monson: Yeah, it's so cool, though, that you're thinking, Okay, we're not reinventing the wheel like someone somewhere has solved for this. It's just might not be in the hot sauce world. And that is incredibly creative and makes a ton of sense because kombucha is already fermented and they have the equipment and I think that sometimes we're so used to looking at something a certain way we can't step outside and take a different perspective. And sometimes it does take months to come up with that kind of creativity. So massive congrats to you. I am very excited to get some of this hot sauce enhance. Tell us more about really what makes it unique. Your favorite things. I'm a massive foodie. So what are your favorite things to pair it with outside of oysters because we definitely want to hear more about the product itself and I love it. Well

Molly Fienning: Thank you. So we have four sauces and we have three honeys. Our four sauces. The original is a Fresno Bay sauce, kind of has tomato notes, it's a red sauce, we have a little bit of a hotter version of that. That's called our Carolina that has a little bit of Dr. Pepper pepper in the Fresno for a bigger bite. But again, Chef believes in like flavor over flame we like to say so we're not the hottest hot sauce out there it is about elevating your food, it is about balance nuance making your food kind of tastes better and more flavorful and not killing your palate. So you can't taste what you're eating because it's just like fire or whatever. And so, food and wine magazine named us Tabasco for the 21st century. Because of that because of the process and the way we kind of honor the ingredients. And so those are the two red sauces. We have a green sauce and what you put on them. I love them on protein. They're great on any kind of chicken meat steak, obviously shrimp, oysters, any kind of raw bar stuff, you know, crabs or whatever. And then also really good and I think because of the fermentation adds a little sort of umami funkiness with it. It's a great ingredient in cooking. So it's really delicious in stews, and soups and chilis, in sauces, and marinades because it adds a little kind of like, depth of flavor. Yeah, not just a condiment after afterthought at the end of a meal.

Shannan Monson: Oh, I love that. I know you mentioned I think on Instagram I saw you putting in the guacamole too.

Molly Fienning: Yes. So The Verde is amazing in guacamole. I'll do a really clean it's actually it's phenomenal on any kind of avocado like avocado, sliced avocado salad, or like avocado toast or guacamole but it's great with just some fresh lines. So they're at a sauce. The verde is a serrano pepper and to balance the Serrano's, he adds fennel and Vidalia onion and salt. And it's zesty and herbaceous and gardeny and it's kind of like this secret cult sauce. And people don't gravitate towards a green sauce typically, but it is everybody's favorite. It's all my girlfriend's favorite. And it's amazing on eggs and tacos and enchiladas and any kind of Mexican food. But it's, it's we go through that the most in our house. habanero is our hottest and that has sort of citrus for notes of the habanero. So my partner adds orange zest and carrot puree to that. And

that's really delicious. That's kind of our most pure heat sort of disappears as heat into a dish. But it's great. You know, do you want to add a heat element of like on a veggie burger or burger or into a spicy cocktail, that's sort of like a habanero peach Margarita is delicious.

Shannan Monson: Never thought about that. I feel like I've just traveled to Charleston and eaten in the last five minutes just listening to talk about all these houses.

Molly Fienning: So and kind of multipacks you can try them all and then with so the way we fresh, fresh the sauce, you're left with a little bit of a pepper mash, that's that's a wet mash. We dehydrate that and with the habanero mash, we actually fold that into 100% raw Georgia and wildflower honey, and we make a hot honey because we didn't want to waste. You know, one of our core values is sustainability and kind of not not wasting where we can. And that that was beautiful, you know, byproduct food byproduct that was sort of pure and raw and fermented. And so we're like what can we do with this and explore this hot honey trend and that's become one of our best sellers through the fact that it's just this growing food trend and we're the highest quality hot honey out there and don't add additives or foreign honey or and keep it sort of local and raw and delicious. And that's amazing on everything any kind of like sandwich or cheese or again in a cocktail. You know, my partner puts it on in like Greek yogurt with fruit and granola for breakfast. I love it I'm like a biscuit or cornbread or some kind of like yummy carb. It's it's a great, it's it's insane.

Shannan Monson: I'm fascinated. As always listening they probably would have been out to eat in almost. Yeah, no, no, I'm very excited. Very excited. I'm so I'm so excited. I'll definitely share I know you're sending some I'll share on Instagram so you guys can see it too. I think we are all ready for a little spice in our life, something different and a change of routine, especially when it comes to food. So I'm very excited. And one of our core values and core values a lot. One of our core values at CEO school is helping more women hit this 2% Cloud this 2% statistic less than 2% of female founders ever hit a million dollars in revenue. You've done it twice now. What advice would you give to someone that feels like this might be out of reach, or they're on their way? And so like one last piece of advice, or maybe just inspiration you can leave us with?

Molly Fienning: Yeah, and I think going back a little bit to what I said I really believe in releasing yourself of time deadlines, you know, honoring, honoring your own journey. And knowing you're going to get there, it's just a matter of what you know, and I think women are often we're so hard on ourselves, oh, I want a million dollars by next year. You know, that's great, but you also we know, we can't control the macroeconomic climate of a global pandemic and restaurant shutting down. So we kind of have to have to sort of set the goal out there and then be gentle with ourselves and with our team and give ourselves grace. And so I feel like the confidence that if you you know, if you commit and persevere and again get up every day and do the work every day and put the fire out whatever it is and and sort of you know, know have the confidence that it's happening and you kind of turn it over to the universe and say all right, whenever it whenever it is great. I know it's happening but like you know, thank you for whatever you believe in God universe for sort of making this happen at the right time. As opposed to on your own timeline. And, and then just sort of know in your heart It's happening and sort of enjoy

the journey. Enjoy the work because if we are happy if we are enjoying what we do day to day, then we'll get there. Then we won't burn out then we, you know, you know will sort of success monetary success will follow where that kind of joy and sense of purpose exist.

Shannan Monson: I completely agree and I mentioned something earlier about about failure and releasing that and I think that as long as we are willing to one of the things I say that half the game is just staying in it as long as you're willing to keep getting up. I know you mentioned putting out fires and solving the next problem as long as you're willing to solve the next problem and keep going. It's inevitable I really feel that all of our success is inevitable. It's just a matter of are we gonna put in the time work effort and really patience to make it happen. So thank you so much. This has been such an honor to have you on the show. Where can we follow you if not more about, or purchase red hot sauce? Are you are you an Instagram? Yes, you're an Instagram,

Molly Fienning: Red Clay Hot Sauce on Instagram and I'm Molly Fienning on Instagram, and then redclayhotsauce.com we sell all our, our sauces and homies there.

Shannan Monson: Go get some I'm excited to get some of that you've called Verde. I'm excited to get some and I will be exclusively eating my avocado with that moving forward. So thank you so much for coming on the show.

Molly Fienning: Thank you for having me.

Shannan Monson: Thank you so much for listening. We hope you enjoy the show. Follow us at CEO school on Instagram for show notes, inspiration and exclusive behind the scenes that you won't find anywhere else. We also have an absolutely incredible resource for you. It's the seven lessons we learned building million dollar businesses. These are complete game changers and we want to give it to you absolutely free. All you have to do is leave a review of the podcast, why you love the show, screenshot the review and email it to Hello@ceoschoolpodcast.com and we'll send it your way.