

Get Real

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Get Real Podcast Episode: 066

How to Survive and Thrive As a New Entrepreneur with Angela Thomas

Host: Ron Phillips

Welcome to the get real podcast. Your high octane boosted in the trenches. Tell it like it is reality therapy for personal, business, and real estate investing success with your host entrepreneurs, Angela Thomas and Ron Phillips. It's time to get real.

Ron: Hey, everybody, welcome back to another episode of the Get Real podcast. I am your host Ron Phillips. I'm here and I'm back with Angela Thomas. Hey, I to ask from the past, everybody, Angela is back. So before we get started with Angela, make sure you like us. Give us a review. Can find us on GetRealEstateCapital.com. You can also find us at RPCapital.com or excuse me. RPCInvest.com. If you're looking for RPCapital, you can find us there.

Ron: You got the RPCapital domain. OK. Yeah. And still still some other jokers. Got that one. Don't go to his site. Well, I mean you can completely do if you want to find real estate, but you won't win. You won't find that. Welcome back, Angela.

Angela: Thank you. Happy to be here. Thanks.

Ron: Yeah. So, as promised, I said we would invite Angela back to give us a real look at what the new entrepreneur experience and journey is all about. And Angela has promised to get real with us today.

Angela: So the rollercoaster thing is true. Right?

Ron: Yes. So, I mean, any of you out there who are entrepreneurs, you will appreciate and you will empathize and sympathize and everything else with Angela's journey and those of you who are not. And are aspiring to become, you will have a clear look at what it what it really takes to do that, so let's just catch everybody up. So in December. A little bit before that, actually, you told me, hey, I want to go do my own thing, and here's my thing. And since then, you have you've done that. You've gone out. You've done your own thing. And you've been working really, really hard. I know. And. So just kind of catch us up like what's happened over the last. What is it, that four months?

Angela: Wow. I guess it is four months, a little crazy, 3ish. It feels like longer, actually.

Ron: Well, since then.

Angela: The coolest thing is, I mean, just to, you know, brag right up front is, you know, I've got my business where it's handling expenses and, you know, making a tiny bit of profit with just me in it, which is a good point because it gets you to where you can actually kind of. You know, you don't have to feel desperate anymore, which hurts your sales, as you know, when you don't have to take on people you don't want to work with. So that's a big thing for me getting there, though. You know, that happened just recently, was such a roller coaster. I mean, I had some help with, you know, some friends of yours reached out to me, which was awesome and they're great, great clients. But getting my own was and is interesting figuring out the right path to do that. And I've kind of evolved over that time, too. I've been I mean, I've been reading everything I can get my hands on or audio booking it like.

Ron: On ten times speed. Sometimes I wish they had three times speed for some of the books. I'm like, really?

Angela: Depends on how slow they talk. You know, if they're a fast talker, it's it's fine. But I've been reading everything and my product and offer have kind of evolved over the last three months while talking to potential clients and current clients. Because, you know, it's all it's not about what I think is valuable. It's about what these people actually want. And they're all a little bit different. So, man, I would say the biggest thing that's been most valuable for me is talking to as many of the people that I'm trying to target as possible. So great.

Ron: So I guess there's a few things in there. Not the least of which is don't be so rigid in what it is that you're doing. You wear when you're new, you got to be a little bit malleable in it. Not, not crazy. Bendable, right? Yes. Want to stay in your lane. But if you think your lane is this and everybody's telling you your lane is that. It's pretty important to be able to shift quickly and be able to to compensate for that, right? Yeah, I think that's really, really important.

Angela: Yeah, I've really learned that a lot of these business owners, I mean, they're doing great. They're making a ton of money. They're, you know, but they're trying to grow their business and they don't have a lot of the pieces in place that I would have thought they did. So which, you know, kind of it's cool that, you know, like that book. What was its Ready, Fire, Aim, you know? I mean, these people are firing like crazy and they are making money. But they don't have systems necessarily or, you know, they don't have an offer and now they don't have the landing pages, the content, any of that stuff that you kind of need to to really get some traction. So that's kind of changed. I mean, I started out offering more just the tech side and I've realized that people need help with these pieces in their business, because they're so busy, like firing and selling and not firing people. Sorry. Selling. Hopefully not firing too many people. You know what happens. But shooting. And they don't have time to. They don't have the time to like or they don't stop and put these pieces in place that help their business grow.

Ron: Yeah. There is a point where you need to aim. Yeah.

Angela: You mean you eventually have to aim and getting those you know, those assets and those valuable pieces in your business. Ah, you know, it's crazy important to get you to the next

level. Otherwise, you're just. It's all based off, you're running, right? Like the 10x method that works for a while, but you can only run that. There's a great book 10x method, but. You can only do so much action, it only gets you so far. You have to figure out how to replicate that. Right. And a lot of that is having these assets in place. Having videos and content and blogs and books and, you know, all that stuff. I can't do all that for them, but I've kind of evolved a little bit into helping them figure out how to get those assets.

Ron: So that's really cool. It's really cool. I think the other thing is really important that you said is that you've been reading everything you could get your hands on. Yes. About making this happen. Right.

Angela: In that sense, it's a, people say twelve hour days when you're starting a business. But I read these books in the morning on the treadmill and then at night before I go to bed and then, you know, my workday is from wake up to going to sleep. And I feel kind of bad. I have a four year old, but. But I mean, in this I don't know right now when you're because I'm in charge of sales, I have to build these assets for my business. I have to keep my customers super happy and get them referrals from them. I mean, there's so many things you're focused on when you're the core person. And I know I'm going to need to hire somebody to handle some of that. But it's really good when you're starting out to be in all those seats. Right. So that you figure out how to adjust them and make them work to set you up for growth before you hire someone to do it for you, I think.

Ron: And I think Angela's really, really cool that I think a lot of people have the misconception that when you start a business that you have to lose money for a year or two years would break even or whatever. And. There's a lot of businesses that do that. It's not. It's a unique thing to have a business that in three months can be profitable. That's a very unique thing, right in the business world. Most businesses don't make a profit or much of one for a year. And most businesses are out of business in a year or two years because they don't. And to put as much work in the heart and soul and effort and all of this stuff into a business, only to have it fail because you didn't figure out how to make profit. Yeah. Right. That's really, really too bad. And so there was a perfect example of of leveraging everything. I mean, talk to people about leveraging literally everything that you know, who you know. Everything that you've learned over your lifetime, you literally have leveraged every ounce of that make this thing work in three months.

Angela: Yes, I have. I mean, obviously, the network that that has come from, you know, being in your world for the last decade was a huge part. But also, I mean, I basically started this as kind of a freelancer. I thought, you know, what am I good at and who needs it? And then I talk to those people and figure out how I can make that fit with exactly what they need. And it's not necessarily how I want to grow this long term, but you have to figure out, even if it's not your exact product that you want or how you see the business growing. I mean, it's important to figure out how to get dollars in the door so that you can build it. I mean, if you don't have any money coming in, there's no engine on this thing, right? So so, yeah, I've leveraged I mean, I've done things that no, that makes it sound bad that I'm not proud of. No, I'm just kidding, nothing unethical or bad.

Ron: But I mean, one of my first clients let's drill into that just a little bit and a little out here.

Angela: Yeah. So one of my first customers who I'm not going to name. Not Ron. Has been, you know, a little bit of a nightmare to work with because I wasn't clear about exactly what my product was, I was more like, hey, I'm going to help you with ready, fire, aim. Yes, because I was desperate for that business and the money coming in every month. Right. So, you know, basically anything he said he wanted, I was like, yeah, no problem. I got it. Which is true. But I took on a lot of jobs that I was not happy about. And and this guy, the way he runs his business, he lets he has like 12 people on his staff and they are in charge. He's not in charge. The 12 people decide everything in that company. And they every little change or desire that they had became my problem. So. Anyway, so, you know, I took him on because I needed the money and that's fine. You know, I think some of your first customers are I mean, you are a little bit desperate. You don't want to sound desperate when you're talking to them, but you need to have money coming in. And if you have to do some things that you wouldn't normally do, like I know when Ron when you started when we started your company, we were given away like 50 percent of the profit on every deal to get leads. Right. Yes.

Ron: And we didn't want that. Which sounds ludicrous.

Angela: Ludicrous profit. It was. It was the total. Yeah.

Ron: Yeah. It was off the top. I mean it was. It was. It was. This was a top line expense. Right. But the alternative was to. I don't really even know we didn't have really an alternative because we couldn't afford the mailer, like I couldn't afford to front that money, so I had to I had to work a week, we had to work this really, really crazy deal with somebody who had the money to actually do the mailer to be able to have a room that we could speak to. Right. And so. Yeah, and it wasn't very long after that we didn't do that anymore.

Angela: Exactly. So I've been taking on customers that, you know, I can I can I am helping them. I'm providing value, but it's not what I want to be doing. But I took them on because I needed the cash coming in to be able to build this out the way I want to, to create the assets I want to create to make my product what I want it to be, to afford marketing. I mean, and, you know, pay my bills. All that stuff you got. You know, I think in the beginning, you do have to take on some interesting jobs and partnerships, too. I mean, that makes it sound like I'm doing something shady and I'm not. But, you know, I'm learning from this who I do want to work with, what my real product is, the boundaries I need to put on it, and future customers. You'll be able to weed those out as I get new customers do fit what I'm looking for and who I want to serve. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think. I think if you're too picky in the beginning, it's gonna stunt your growth.

Ron: So it's kind of like it's kind of like dating, right. So everybody can take themselves back to high school or middle school or whenever you. Whenever you started on every side, if you if you're so picky that you never go on a date. You never actually realize what you like and what

you don't like in a future partner. Right. And so it's the same thing. You have to be able to you to experience some of this stuff as you're as your building your culture and your product and program and that whole who you want to work with and who you don't want to work with, there's no really, no way to understand until you've done it or or had someone else tell you, hey, this is how this is going to work. If you work with, if you work with a fragmented company, you're gonna get a fragmented saying, right.

Ron: Yeah, that's all really. That's so important, I think. Yeah.

Angela: So that's how I did it. I mean, that's how, you know, I went from, you know, leaving your company and then, you know, four months later I've replaced my income, I'm covering expenses and I'm working on growing it. So. It's not always pretty. You know, some days after making a sale like the mental side of it, I'm so like excited and I'm like, this rocks and I'm awesome at this and this is gonna be huge. And then, you know, the next day for no apparent reason and nothing's changed. You're like, Man, I suck. I don't know if I'm that kind of. It's like nothing's changed. Like your customers are still happy, but it's just like the highs and lows just.

Angela: I don't know. They just hit you constantly. I feel like it's hard to remember. You have to stay positive and stay excited about this somehow to keep yourself going in the right direction because it's done.

Ron: I mean, there's a there's a, I think it's and it's probably going to be difficult to put into words, but do your best. I think that people. Another misconception is that, somehow entrepreneurs are just and I guess entrepreneurs are a little bit different in a lot of respects, but. That there's some kind of I don't know, I'm trying to say, but this there's like this is mentally taxing. It is mentally and emotionally draining and somehow after a full drain during a day, somehow you have to figure out how to recharge. So talk us through that, because this it's one thing to be physically tired after working 12 to 16 hours that everybody can understand that because everybody has done that at one point, right. Right. There is a mental and emotional taxation of being an entrepreneur that most people just can't grasp.

Angela: Yeah. And I don't know if I'm the best person to put into words, but I have experienced it very recently and currently. So. So, I mean, the the roller coaster that you're on, and knowing that, you know, your future, my family's future, like everything, people I want to hire my customers. I mean, that's all on me. And that's why I end up getting down. Some days I'm like, where's my next sale coming from? And I love marketing. So, you know it. You know, getting leads in is no problem. But. Getting the right people through the door. Day after day and growing this thing of being able to support other people with it. And, you know, hopefully make a difference in the lives of customers and employees. And I mean, you start thinking about all that when you think about growing it.

Angela: And I know, Ron, you've been through this for a long time, but. It's all a lot of pressure and it makes little things like I know we've laughed about the Corona virus and sorry to bring that up, but stuff like that or the president changing or stuff, I'm like. And my business is still

really small and like, how is this going to affect what I'm doing right now? And you have to start thinking like that, like look at the future. And I let it overwhelm me sometimes. And it's easy to let the stress, you know, hurt your, I mean, I get you know, the tight muscles your back hurting. I mean, the physical stress isn't always just being tired. Being all wired up and think, you know, overthinking everything also takes a toll on your health. So it is important to keep positive.

Ron: Let's shift gears, because now we've we've talked about all how horrible it is. And and we've now we talked most of the people listening out of becoming.

Angela: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. That wasn't my....

Ron: Oh, that's it. This is the Get Real show. This is not sunshine and lollipops every day. It just isn't. Starting and running a business and actually generating a profit is hard. It is no joke. I think so there's a couple of things, right? You're always forward looking. You're always future looking. And Angela is a visionary, kind of like me. And so I know that's where she's headed. She's already got this thing. Well, she's already shot 10 years down the road. Now she's aiming at trying to track down the bullet. Yeah, that was the wrong way to go. But let's talk about the benefits of this, right? Because why would anyone want to do this? If it's literal hell on earth for me, it's only been three months. Anybody can live through hell for three months. But if it's been hell on wheels for three months and, you know, for us, it was goodness, at least a year. Why would anyone do this?

Angela: Because it's not it's not hell on wheels like in between those over-thinking down on yourself days. It's freakin exciting. You know, you're like. I mean, my whole life I've wanted to build something that was mine, you know, and I'm probably not going to go out and build a house or a, you know, a building or whatever. So I want my own living, you know, my own thing, my own company, my own empire. Sorry to use that word. I don't know if it'll ever get that big, but it's so exciting to see your efforts directly benefit you and your family. And to be able to, you know, I'm hoping in the future to be able to help all these people with it. Even my customers. Watching them grow their businesses and, you know, benefit from the things I'm doing for them. It's exciting. It's I mean, it was super cool, you know, at your company, watching people benefit from real estate investing and watching them grow. But when you own it and it's your thing and you created it. I mean, I get to determine, you know, the the the feeling in my company and the culture. And make sure you know and make a difference in life. My customers and it's just cool to own it. I mean, anyone who's done it, it's I don't know if you'd say it differently wrong, but I just I'm not that eloquent with words, but it's really, really cool to be working on something that is yours.

Ron: You know, there's it's. It's a creation. It's wanting to build. Right. And, you know, I got bored like for a couple of years. I basically didn't do a whole lot. And yeah, and man, people who are like geared to build things and create things have to be building and creating something. You know, that's just it's...

Angela: It's this drive. And it doesn't go away right now.

Ron: And then it's kind of like, you know, you've birthed this thing and you also not only do you get to create it, but do you get to watch it grow up, come somewhere else. Right. Yeah. It's really, really it's a it's a special process. But just like being a parent, which a lot of people relate to out there, being a mother you will relate to. It's still hard. It's still really hard work. Raising a family or a kid, right? You created you there is this creation, right? It's really cool, baby. Then the work starts, I mean.

Angela: And then you realize it's all on you. You know, you'll bring a baby home from the hospital and you're like, oh, crap, I'm the owner. It's my fault.

Angela: And you have to read it to figure out what to do in every situation and. I mean, it's the same thing with your company and it's cool, I posted a quote yesterday and it would probably take me a minute to look it up. But some hedge fund billionaire was talking about how he looks at every challenge in his life as a as a puzzle. And when he solves the puzzle, he gets a gem that he gets to add to his. You know, I don't know to his puzzle solving gem thing. Yeah. And then. So when you collect all these gems, you get to solve bigger and more exciting puzzles as you go. And that's kind of what happens. I mean, with raising a kid, like you said, and also with creating a business, you know, each time you solve a problem, it feels good, it's exciting. And you get a build on that. And continue to grow it. And I love that I've always loved solving problems, so it's a good fit.

Ron: You know, and I think the most important thing you talk about building is, is is you can build this thing. But once you've got the saying big enough that it's affecting people, lots of people. You're not only building the thing, you're building the people up with it. Yeah. And then I love that about. It's so cool, right? That you can take even these businesses what you started out helping. If you can help them grow, then they hire more people and they do business with more people. And the ripple effect of this is massive. From a really small business, you know, you can be helping 10 clients of yours, and those 10 businesses can be helping literally thousands of other people in addition to that. Those 10 will help you hire the one and the other, the next person and the next person, which all will gain knowledge from you, your business expertise. And then you will also be gaining gems, I guess, as were targeted gems as this thing grows, because the one thing that people can't take away from you is what you know and who you know. Right. And so your network grows. And because you are avidly out there seeking the knowledge, your knowledge grows. And man, it's just it's really, really cool how you can you can leverage all of this stuff. And it just keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. Oh, yeah. It's remarkable.

Angela: It's amazing how fast. That's why I've been reading so much. I don't know if I'm changing the subject here too much, but I've been reading all these books because you quickly kind of outgrow your own knowledge and you need new gems from books to help you solve new problems. And I mean, I'm going to run out of books here pretty quick, but it's given me a lot of a lot of guidance and, you know, making sure I set things up the right way. And, you know, it just kind of helps you see the next steps.

Ron: I think the other thing that books do, at least for me, Angela, is that they you know, my brain is really creative anyway. But when I'm listening to ideas, my brain goes on a tangent. Yeah. Oh, I will. Come on. Yeah. Just use your. It's like your brain is is going to the gym when you read book.

Angela: Yeah. And that's why I do it on the treadmill. It's like double purpose.

Ron: You know, it's like. I know you think so. I think it's actually like it's like squared or you know.

Angela: Yeah. Yeah. To the ninth power. Well, that's got to be to a significant power. Let's not get into math too much here, but. Yeah.

Ron: Well it's just super, super exciting. So any let's give some give some helpful like words of encouragement to anybody who's starting this. Like if someone's out there and they're thinking, man, I really want to do this. But I'm scared to do it. What would you tell people?

Angela: I would say, like take a hard look at yourself and see what, you know, skills or what you have that can make money right now. Because, I mean, not everybody does that. But that was so important for me is knowing that I wasn't going to starve for a year while I built this thing. And I know there's people out there creating products and software and you can get funding. That's awesome. But that's just my personal advice from my journey, is to find something you can make money with right away and then let it evolved from there. And then, you know, another piece of advice is, I would say not have soft sales until you have a good handle on what you're doing and your product and you have assets and all that. Because talking to your potential and your target clients about your products is huge for understanding what value you provide. And if you need to shift what you're doing. And so I would say definitely handle all calls and talking as many potential clients as you can.

Angela: And then the third thing is just taking little steps. There's so many different things you need to be working on when you're building a business. You know from sales to creating your content and your assets and all that. Setting up everything. Just take little steps in each one each day. You know, I try to talk to a couple leads or potential clients a day. Also creating, working on creating assets. I mean, just little steps towards it. Over time gets you there. You know. So just don't let it overwhelm you. It's easy to look at all of it and freak out and quit. So it just little steps. It's like that compound theory, you know, just keep working on each thing every day and takes some kind of step towards it.

Ron: Yeah, that's really, really good. I think a lot of people have that overwhelm effect when they think of all the stuff they've got to do. I mean, shoot, even people who are looking at investment properties do that to themselves. Right. Oh, yeah. Big, huge thing out of it. And yeah, there's a lot of stuff that goes into it. But look at the next thing you can do was let's just break this down into bite sized pieces and then figure out how long it takes to actually make this happen

and make us comfortable with it. Right. And it's the same thing. The other piece of that in breaking this thing down is organizing your day in such a way that you don't leave one of those pieces behind. Mean, imagine how it would be for Angela if she went a week without talking to clients. Yes. You can't do that when you're new, you have to be every day talking to new potential clients. Every day you have to be doing that.

Angela: You hit on a huge point there. Sorry, when you're. No, go ahead. I was just gonna say that. I think that one of the biggest problems that new entrepreneurs have is they focus on one or the other. And that's like the two things to me, the biggest things are, you know, sales having sales conversations and working on your business, perfecting your product, creating assets, tangible, you know, e-books, videos, your Web site, all that kind of stuff. You can't let either of those drop, right? I have to work on both every day. Yeah. Because it's easy to get wrapped up in making your product absolutely perfect or just doing sales activity. And I mean, sales activity is most important, obviously, but they're both really important.

Ron: That's the whole Ready, Fire, Aim thing, right. When you have a concept. So because Angela had a concept. I did. She had and sold the concept yet it wasn't perfect yet. But shooting the bullet is his sales. That's what that means. It's ready. I have a concept now. I'm going to shoot after I shoot. I will aim right now and I'll figure it out afterwards. But if I can't make a sale, so many people go into business and they spend all of this time and all of this money trying to create this perfect thing that they don't even know if anybody even wants.

Angela: Yeah. Just because you want doesn't mean someone else.

Ron: Just because you think it's cool doesn't mean everyone else thinks it's cool. No. And just because Angela thought that there was a hole in small businesses doesn't mean there actually was one. Right. Right. You have to be able to go out there. And it does two things. Number one, it proves concept. But number two, it puts money in the pocket of the business that you have to have money coming in. Right. And that's to be people. People get out there and they burn through money without a proven concept and wonder why things aren't working out. And Angela, you did this in the right order. Really, really good job, and I'm amazed. I mean, guys, just think about that. You go from concept to profitable. In three months, that's that's really cool.

Angela: Thank you, my amazing, my network through you. Definitely helped. I got to say. So. Well, use your network for people you know.

Ron: Yeah. Everybody has this and people take it for granted or or they don't look at it. And and they do one of two things. Right. We talked about this in previous, so people have missed that. Don't shoot yourself in the foot on the way out the door where you're leaving because you never know when those people can help you in your new venture. Right. So don't do that. Number one.

Angela: And go be a decent person.

Ron: And number two, when you leave. I mean, think about all of the resources that you have and don't be scared to go out and actually utilize them as one of the things that Angela did while. Yeah. I mean. There is a network, but those that network is was available to her, right? And she knew that. And so, but you can't be scared to use that network. Now, I'm not suggesting you should leave a company and start calling the company's clients without permission. I was going to say that.

Angela: I was going to say I didn't I didn't do anything sketchy with it. And I didn't get all MLM on people not to hurt anyone's MLM feelings, but I didn't reach out to people and try to get them to meet up so I could pitch them. I actually tried to just put it out there and let people know what I was doing in a non-sales-y way and let them reach out to me, which worked really well for me and didn't make anyone, you know, skeezy alarm bells go off. So. Right. Right. Yeah. And I didn't chase down any of Ron's clients.

Ron: So it's really important. So I'm saying don't overlook the network that you have out there, but don't utilize it in a douchebag way. If you're leaving a company, don't go try to raid the company. Right. That's a. A douche bag thing to do. And in my opinion, it will hurt you long term because this network that Angela has had access to still she still has access to it because she didn't do it in a douchebag way and it didn't hurt me at all. Right. It only helps me because if these other if these other customers are helped by her, ultimately it helps me certainly makes me look better because I'm the person who introduced them. And number two, if they do better and I'm doing business with them anyway, it helps me. Right. So everybody can't be shortsighted about things, but you can't be shortsighted about what you have access to. Right. I think people overlook. It's your network is worth way more than literally anything else because people are really what make things happen. So, man, just be a good human and then take your idea out there. Go try to help people as Angela has done, man. Well, well done. Thank you. Rumps for you. By the way, if any of you out there listening, have a small business and you need some help in the areas that she was talking about. She does a fantastic job. I was her first client. I'm still her client. Many of my friends are her clients. I know she's got some people that I don't know, too, who are clients of hers.

Angela: I got a couple of my own, don't worry.

Ron: So feel free to reach out to Angela and find out what she does and see if there's a fit there. It's a really inexpensive way to get a piece of your business that would cost you a small fortune if you tried to do it internally. And so reach out to her. What where can they find you again?

Angela: VATechs.com Or you can e-mail me at AngelaT@VATechs.com. And that's Angela T, Angela T. Yeah. And it's VATechs.com.

Ron: Just like Virginia Tech with an s, VA Techs.

Ron: Since when does it? Since when does a technical college have sports teams? I don't know. All right, everybody. Appreciate it. Angela, appreciate it. Thanks for coming on. We will see you

all next week if you like the episode, man. And this one in particular, because it was Angela's. So if you put thumbs down on it, you hurt her feelings, not mine. My feelings don't do that. Right. And then write us a great review that helps more than, you know, give us a five star review, send us out shares with all of your friends. You can find us, GetRealEstateSuccess.com. Find my other company at RPCinvest.com and till next week, guys, we'll see you. Thanks, Ron.

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