

Allison Beardsley, Owner of Club Pilates

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I had a pleasure of meeting Allison Beardsley, a funny, intelligent women with a lively personality. Allison recently came into my personal branding class to share the story of how she started her own Pilates studio called Club Pilates and how she grew it into what I would call a Pilates empire.



Allison's story starts out as a young soon-to-be mom (6 months pregnant with her son) working in a gym as a personal trainer and Pilates instructor in San Diego. She was having a hard time making ends meet, making around three thousand dollars a month. She did the math, saw that the gym was taking 50-60 percent of her earnings, and came to the conclusion that she would be earning way more if she just opened her own business.

With just that simple math, Allison maxed out her credit cards and created her very own Pilates studio in her duplex home. As her new business gained some recognition, she gained more and more students. Her clientele consisted of multimillionaires. Her students were successful businessmen/women, and Allison was able to get free business advice from the best. She took this advice and made the most of her little knowledge of entrepreneurship. Allison didn't go to school for business. Her academic career consisted of community colleges and she then graduated from San Diego State University with a major in kinesiology. Allison thinks her lack of business knowledge is a main reason for her success. She was unable to overthink every business move she made, which allowed her to make fearless and risky decisions that paid off. During the crash of 08', she thrived. Her students weren't able to pay for classes, so she lowered her prices to around \$10/ class. Groupon was founded in January of 2008, and Allison was able to leverage the growth of Groupon to her advantage. She listed coupons on the site for her studio, and sales went up. Hundreds of the Groupon coupons were used by her clients.



Allison was then able to rent a larger building separate from her home to create her own Pilates studio in. Only a few days after getting the new space, it was up and running as a Pilates studio. Her husband stayed up all night changing flooring, painting, and turning it into a Pilates studio. Allison admits, she is the one with the crazy ideas and her husband is the one to implement and put them into action. The crash of 08' was almost a blessing to Allison. She was able to obtain very cheap rent in a bigger location and gain loyal customers. Allison was making around 35,000/ month. Her business was growing when

other companies were going out of business. Her students wanted to do the same and start their own Pilates studios, so Allison decided to franchise. Her students opened up their own studios under the Club Pilates name, and her brand continued to grow. Allison's true enjoyment came from envisioning ideas, and bringing them to life. As Allison's studios grew, she lost sight of her true enjoyment in birthing her new ideas. When LA Fitness took interest in buying Allison's studios, it prompted her to go down the path of selling. The timing was just right. Ultimately LA Fitness didn't end up buying, but the founder of LA Boxing presented to her the same opportunity. She then ended up selling her studios to LA Boxing and moved to the mountains of Lake Tahoe.

It wasn't too long before Allison realized she wasn't the snow bunny she thought she would be. So she moved just down the mountain to Carson City, Nevada and decided to open her Pilates studios there. By using an app on her phone, she looked at the demographics that best suited her clientele,

and opened 3 locations. Two of the locations are in Reno (one of them is located in northwest Reno), and another in Sparks. When she first opened in 2015 her Nevada businesses were flatlining. She admits, Nevada has a different demographic than San Diego did, and her studio name wasn't recognized yet. But since then, her studios have been a hit. Allison views herself as an investor in the company; she rarely goes to her studios to observe or teach and is able to pay her Pilates studio manager's a six figure salary. She is also able to spend a lot of her time hanging out and homeschooling her children (every mom's dream)! The success Allison has achieved is unbelievable. At a young age she was able to work for no one but herself, she did what she loved, and she was able to make a very comfortable living doing it.

Her story is remarkable considering all she was able to achieve so early in life with little to no business knowledge. I asked her why she was able to make such bold decisions, and her mindset is amazing. Allison grew up near a trailer park in the hood of Tuscan, so her answer was simple. If she lost everything and things didn't go to plan, the worst that would happen is that she would live in a trailer park back in Yuma, Arizona. But, she had faith in herself, was always humble and gracious, had a proactive mindset, and made it all happen.

I am very thankful that she came into our class to talk. Her story was everything I needed to hear. Our values and mindsets align, yet she is everything I am not. She is a risk taker and a free spirit. She said on the phone with me, "If I were to die, I would want to look back and be happy with the quality of my life." I tend to neglect having fun.. and to be honest I would not be happy looking back on my life. I didn't experience a lot during college.. I mean I never went to a college football game or college party due to my workaholic nature. Allison made an interesting statement regarding this- filling up every minute of your schedule decreases creative thinking. I can honestly say is true with the fact that I work 45 hours a week and am taking 4 graduate school classes and have no time to think of my basic needs. So if you are like me, please make a change in your life. Don't try to graduate as young as you can, don't put your mental health at risk just to compare yourself and say you are doing better than your peers. It is not

worth it, and I am very honored to have learned this advice while I am still young.

Inspired by her story, I asked her for some insight that would greatly benefit those of you trying to figure out your post-academic paths:

- **Listen to people, read books, and never stop learning.** Be humble enough to take feedback and adopt a learning mindset. There is always someone who knows more than you, so use that to your advantage.
- **Have fun. Don't plan everything. Just look at the big picture, and take actions every day to get there.**
- For entrepreneurs: **get in the corridor.** If you want to open a pie shop: work in the pie shop, figure out what works/what doesn't, improve it, and open your up own pie shop.
 - The process should go like this: employee, self- employed business owner, and investor.

I finished my conversation with her by asking what she credits her success to. Her answer: faith, no fear, and her husband. Take this into consideration! Be confident in yourself, don't compare yourself, and surround yourself by people that will never stop supporting you.