



## MEET FRANCE

**The ultimate serial entrepreneur:  
business owner, yoga instructor & food blogger**



## **On her design background, starting her own business, and the cooking blog she runs with her mom:**

"We're in my apartment in Brooklyn, New York, in Carroll Gardens. I'm French, I grew up in Hong Kong, New York, and Paris. I did my studies in the U.S., stayed in the U.S. for work. Because opportunities tend to be a little bit better in the U.S. than in France. It's been almost 19 years (since I came to the states.) I have a design background, and I went into strategy for a design company, and then I left design and did purely strategic branding and product innovation.

I started a branding and product innovation consultancy with a former colleague of mine a year and a half ago, so that's my main occupation or my kind of bread-winning occupation. So we help big companies start new brands or define the products that they need to launch in the next few years. As well, I started a cooking blog with my mom a year ago. It's called, Allo Maman, What's Cooking?! It's kind of like a mother-daughter cook-off.



She lives in Paris, I live in Brooklyn, and we basically do recipes from the same core ingredients. My mom's a super good cook, and I wanted to do a project with her because she had an accident and I wanted to make sure I did something as an adult with her. She's a great cook, I didn't know how to cook at all. So I figured, let's do a project together around cooking, and I'll learn how to cook in the process."

## **On the ups and downs of entrepreneurship:**

"The first week we started, a year and a half ago, my business partner was sick as a dog, I had never seen him like that. And that had to be psychological. I was in my PJs until 4 PM every day, and I was taking 2-hour lunch breaks watching TV. And I was like, "what system am I cheating?" At the beginning, you feel a little lost. You don't know how to prioritize your time, what to do with your days.

There's so much that you're just kind of paralyzed in front of your computer. You know you have to make the best of your day and make the best use of your time, because you've got tons. But sometimes it's actually counterproductive because you don't use it well and you waste so much time. There's the hardship of winning business in my industry, because we do service."

## On working effectively with a business partner:

"There's also the adaptation of working with your business partner. When you set up a business, you tend to talk about how you want to work together. But a few years in, you forget to continue to talk about that, and so we've learned how to give each other feedback quite a bit, in terms of how we deal with each other, how we deal with the workload, and how we communicate with each other. Another thing is checking in with your business partner to see if this is still something you want to do, to understand if you're at the same level with your business partner, because that's really important.

One person might want to get married and have babies and work less, and one person might want to buy an apartment and work more, to pay the mortgage. Finding time to explore other avenues while you're running a money-making machine is the hardest."



## On learning through experience to forge your career path:

"For me, I learn by doing. Just like the cooking blog—I didn't know how to cook, and I had to start a cooking blog in order to force myself to cook, in order to learn how to cook. To be honest, it's not because I started this business and then I had the cooking blog that I'm done and that I'm "up there." I always say that this business, the consulting business, is the beginning of my entrepreneurial life. So, running this type of consulting service business is for me to learn what it's like to be on my own, what it's like to have the stress and the insecurities that come with owning a business. But ultimately, I would like to have, not a service business, but a product business. I don't feel like I've set the perfect life, and I don't feel like I'm done. I feel like it's a constant evolution and a constant work-in-progress. I think I became more flexible and more open to admitting that certain things are not working, and that I need to make a change in order to be happier."



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