

BEYOND THE GRIND

Amanda Ludwig on Leading the #AntiHustleMovement

For Amanda Ludwig, her advocacy for the #antihustlemovement is not just a trend; it's a testament to her personal journey and a pivotal aspect of her leadership philosophy.

As a transformational leader, Amanda intertwines her exceptional business acumen with a profound understanding of the human element in the corporate world.

Her approach goes beyond traditional metrics of success, focusing on cultivating a culture that values rest, critical thinking, and personal well-being alongside professional achievement.

In this exclusive interview, Amanda Ludwig discusses her journey from

a self-driven entrepreneur to a visionary leader advocating for the #antihustlemovement. She delves into the importance of understanding the "why" behind the "how" in leadership, the need for unconventional thinking, and the significance of identifying the root causes of restlessness.

What according to you makes one transformational? How do you integrate the same thought into your leadership?

A truly exceptional leader not only boosts a company's financial performance but also shapes its culture. These two components are vital for long-term growth and prosperity in any organization.

As a leader, I prioritize two key elements that achieve both

objectives:

Unlocking the power of unconventional thinking.

Critical thinking skills are in short supply in today's workforce, regardless of age, gender, or education level. My aim as a leader is to help teams see things that may not be obvious at first glance. I encourage them to ask questions, voice theories, and contribute their insights to solve problems.

Teaching the "why" behind the "how."

Any leader can provide standard operating procedures (SOPs) to their team. However, a truly transformational leader goes beyond that and explains the reasons behind the tasks they



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assign. By doing so, I empower my team to excel in their roles, boosting job satisfaction and confidence.

Implementing these two approaches may require extra time when onboarding new employees. Yet, I have consistently witnessed the benefits over the years. Empowering employees in these ways cultivates self-sufficiency, confidence, and independent decision-making abilities, ultimately leading to significant time savings in the long run.

Talk to us about your growing up years. What is your earliest memory as a leader / entrepreneur that you can remember?

From a young age, I displayed a natural knack for managing money, staying organized, and taking charge of my time. According to my mother, I kept track of my allowance money in a ledger when I was 4! (I think I was likely closer to 6!)

By middle school, my entrepreneurial spirit was evident. I chose homeschooling because I believed I could save time by teaching myself rather than relying on a teacher. At the beginning of each school year, my textbooks would arrive, and I would sit down with a calculator, divide the number of pages in the text by the number of days I wanted to study (usually 3-4 months), set my daily goals, then get to work. My mom mentioned that if she saw me playing outside, she was confident that my work was done for the day!

By my senior year of high school, my passion for business led me to work at a prestigious finance company during the day and complete my studies at night.

But it wasn't just innate traits that shaped my entrepreneurial journey. My father, a lifelong entrepreneur, passed down a mindset of endless possibilities. He instilled in his children that everything is *figureoutable* long before Marie Forleo wrote about it! His example instilled in me the confidence that I could "figure out" how to succeed at just about anything!

How are you helping entrepreneurs and executives improve their overall business performance without sacrificing their personal lives?

In 2021, my life took an unexpected turn. I was forced to step away from my thriving career, sell my client list, and face a challenging illness head-on. Burnt out from the demanding pace of working nonstop, I realized I needed a different approach to not only fight this illness, but also to prioritize my overall well-being when I returned to my career.

Throughout my journey, I had the privilege of working with top doctors, therapists, mentors, and coaches. Drawing from my experience as a business advisor and fractional CFO for over a decade, I've developed a unique methodology that blends professional success and personal well-being.



Let me share the core idea behind my methodology through this funny story. I once confided in my sister about a tough situation with a client, expressing my wish to escape to a tranquil tropical island and have a zero-responsibility job at a snow shack. I'll never forget her life-changing response. She reminded me that my ambition and drive would inevitably lead me to not just manage the snow shack, but "You'd open your own snow

shack, and soon, you'd start a snow shack franchise, and you'd be on all the islands. It's just *who you are*." And she was right!

I firmly believe that our inability to unwind and embrace rest is often a symptom of a deeper issue. That's why my work focuses on:

- Identifying the root cause of our restlessness.

- Objectively viewing whether pressures that are causing stress are from external factors or internal insecurities.

- Implementing effective strategies to maintain focus and productivity during peak business seasons, while also allowing for periods of rest and recovery that fuel mental clarity and creativity.

You have been vocal about the #antihustlemovement. Talk to us about this movement and the importance of attaining work-life balance.

When I am speaking on this topic, I often have the audience envision their career goals. I can always feel the energy in the room while people are envisioning the status or the income they aspire to.



Then I ask them to envision themselves when they reach that goal. Who will they be? Will they be happy or stressed? Do they look tired or energized? Are they surrounded by friends and family?

Sadly, every time I reach that point in the exercise, the mood in the room plummets. So much of what we learn in our youth revolves around an “achievement leads to reward” structure. Especially in America, we are taught that hard work and dedication always pays off. To hustle and to grind is to win. But what is missing in that tale is that without substantial teaching on the benefits of rest and a focus on health, the hustle isn't sustainable. And then comes the guilt and shame we put on ourselves for becoming too burnt out to remain successful. So, we hide it and push even harder, often leading to serious health consequences.

Having nearly lost my life to success, I'm on a mission to ensure others don't take the same path that I did. Coining the term #antihustlemovement, I am here to give hope that sustainable success is achievable without giving up *everything!*

What would be your advice for emerging women entrepreneurs when it comes to establishing market presence?

I am seeing a huge shift in the market over the last 5-7 years, and what it boils down to is that people are truly seeking out authenticity. Between social media and user-friendly platforms that allow us all to create our own websites overnight, the market is overwhelmed with choices of service-providers. And, since COVID, the increased level of consumers/companies willing to have work done remotely has

increased significantly, so the competition is now worldwide.

So, my best advice to emerging women entrepreneurs is to be 100% authentically and unapologetically you. There is only one you, and if your brand shows the world who you are, you will attract the people who have been looking for you!

Looking ahead, what is your vision for your brand? What are you most excited about?

Sharing my experiences and methodology from the stage, through podcasts and workshops, and in 2024, in a book, is extremely powerful and fulfilling work. But the vision doesn't stop there. I want to be in the room when corporations are having the conversation about converting to a 4-day work week for the well-being of their employees.

I want to educate and inspire the leaders that decide our labor laws. And most importantly, I want to see the #antihustlemovement become part of mainstream culture, which means that in my lifetime, I'll see a decrease in stress-related illnesses, less people suffering from depression and anxiety, improved family structures and wealth generated by executives and entrepreneurs who have the energy and vision to fulfill their purpose.



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