

Interview with Ally Freund Loprete March 12, 2012

Success Profiles Radio with Brian K Wright



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My guest this week Success Profiles Radio was Ally Freund Loprete, who is a champion for those who seek to balance careers with caring for their children by starting an at-home business. Many parents struggle with needing two incomes while raising a family, but Ally and I will discuss how parents can stay at home, meet and exceed their financial needs, and still be a vital part of their kids' lives. Ally is the creator of the national directory www.ourmilkmoney.com, designed to help stay-at-home parents network and do business with one another.

Brian: Hello and welcome to Success Profiles Radio. I am your host Brian K. Wright and it is a pleasure to be with you here today. I'm honored that you chose to spend part of your day with me here and this is going to be a really fantastic show. I'll be introducing my guest shortly and I promise this will be a fun and informative hour. It's going to be really fantastic. First, I want to take a minute or two to share some things I've been learning and thinking about lately and I'll do this every week.

I'm continuing to read a really fantastic book called *The Compound Effect* by Darren Hardy. He's the publisher of *Success* magazine. In one section of the book he discusses the importance of having a consistent routine that would predict performance. For example, he talked about how golf champion Jack Nicklaus had a very specific routine that he went through every time he was ready to take a shot. In fact, there was a psychologist who followed Jack around a course during a major tournament and timed his routine for every single shot during a round. His routine never varied for more than one second on any shot through the entire round, which is absolutely incredible. That's the mark of consistency for sure.

Meanwhile, during the 1996 Masters tournament this very same psychologist followed Greg Norman around the course. He famously lost that tournament with a huge collapse during the stretch of the final round. Not surprisingly, Greg's pre-shot routine started to get faster as the round progressed. As a result, the lack of consistency in his routine resulted in more erratic shots and greater unpredictability. His performances and results took a huge nosedive. So it's very important that we have a steady and predictable routine to guide us through every day. This could be related to prayer, exercise, meditation, planning our day, or whatever the course might be. The importance of establishing and maintaining a consistent routine cannot be understated.

With that in mind I do want to introduce my guest. My guest this week is Ally Loprete and let me tell you a little bit about her. She's known as the work/life balance parenting expert. Her career began when she founded the widely popular website www.ourmilkmoney.com. This is an online search

<http://successprofilesradio.com>

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director that lists products and services of thousands of self-employed parents in more than 120 cities across the country. In addition to inspiring a movement of work-at-home moms and dads who support each other with their own purchasing power, Ally has created an abundance of opportunity for parents who are seeking alternatives to expensive daycares and long hours away from home. Ally has also become a nationally recognized personality through her widely popular internet show, *This Little Parent Stayed at Home*, which airs on Fridays, where she is helping 1 million persons bring their personal careers home. It's on her weekly live show that she's able to help challenged career parents deal with the sometimes overwhelming prospect of starting a new business. This is in addition to running a household and creating a safe haven for parents across the country to thrive and get the support they need in their personal journeys.

With all this in mind, let me bring on my guest, Ally Loprete. Ally, are you there?

Ally: I'm here. Hi Brian. How are you?

Brian: I'm doing fantastic. Welcome to Success Profiles Radio. It's really an honor to have you on the show.

Ally: Thank you. The honor is all mine. I just love watching you grow and I love listening to you talk to your audience. You're doing some pretty amazing things here.

Brian: I really appreciate that. Tell me how this all started. You haven't always been a self-employed parent. You started in the corporate world. Some things made you realize that that's not where you wanted to be. So talk to us about that.

Ally: You're right. I wasn't always a self-employed parent. I wasn't always a parent. Let's start there. It's so funny that I talk to so many hundreds of thousands of parents on a weekly basis and we all sort of feel the same way. That when we decided to become parents, we really did not know what we were in for. At the time I was working in corporate America, in the entertainment world. I worked for the ABC television network. I loved my job and career. I was climbing corporate ladders and all that. I was dealing with all the politics of working in the corporate world and I didn't mind any of it. Then I had my first child, which was planned. I had always planned on getting pregnant and having a baby. But I always thought he was just going to kind of fit into my life like a puppy. It never dawned on me really what was going to come over me, the metamorphosis that was going to come over my husband and I as we changed into parents.

What happened was I went on my maternity leave which was 3 months long, very generous of my company to pay for that. But when I came back to work I was a completely different person. I was not focused; I couldn't focus on my job. I resented everybody and every thing that I had to do. The bottom line was that I didn't want to be there anymore. I had something more important. I had changed. I was in love with my baby boy. I hated dropping him off at daycare and having somebody else raise him. For about a year I was absolutely the most depressed I'd ever been and I was searching for a way to come home. However, I, because of where I'd been and what I'd been told again and again, was sure I could never be my own boss. I never thought I could hold myself accountable. People had said to me a lot, "why don't you just go and start your own business?" and I said, no, I could never do that.

Then a very strange event that happened as they do when you're sort of looking to make a change for yourself; sometimes you don't really expect it to happen the way that it does. But I lost my job. I was looking; I didn't realize it was sort of the answer to my prayers at the time. I came home and was able to live on a little bit of severance and unemployment. When I came home and started spending a lot of time with my son I remember saying to my husband, I don't care how poor we get, I'm not going back. I'm never going back to where I have to give more of a priority to an employer or somebody instead of my son. There's just no way. That's not the kind of person I am anymore. So we became very poor. We made amazing sacrifices. We were the poorest you could imagine. I didn't care. I was determined to find a way to stay at home. Through that eventually one thing led to another and I eventually created www.ourmilkmoney.com. Because I knew there had to be hundreds of thousands of other

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parents who were in the same situation. I knew if anything that we were going to discover a way to get through it all together. That's how www.ourmilkmoney.com came about.

Brian: A couple of things that really strike me. Number one: when you have a strong enough reason "why" the how and what become so much easier. Things really crystallize for you. And when you're in a situation like that, chances are, as you did mention, you're not the only one experiencing that. It's really great that you were able to put that together. Did you grow up in a self-employed household? Was this a big paradigm shift for you or was it just that you couldn't put up with all that anymore?

Ally: You know it's funny. I did grow up in a self-employed household. My father opened up his own pharmaceutical business when I was about 8 years old. I remember that he was traveling and working for another pharmaceutical company but he became his own boss because he wanted the freedom. He wanted to run his own life. And my mother became a psychoanalyst in which she ran her own practice. For a while, again, they both worked for other people before they eventually opened up their own business and became their own bosses. It never even dawned on me until recently that I must have picked up on watching my parents be their own bosses and run their own lives.

Brian: I think that probably gave you a lot more freedom and confidence that you could do that too. Because you grew watching your parents do the same thing.

Ally: Isn't it funny that didn't even occur to me because I was in the corporate world for so long and I did like it. I was enjoying climbing the corporate ladder and it was a great creative outlet for me working in television. But it is amazing how everything completely changed once I became a parent. I just couldn't focus on any of that anymore. All I cared about was raising my son.

Brian: It sounds like you had a really strong family support system to lean on. That really helps a lot.

Ally: Definitely.

Brian: Great. So talk about Our Milk Money. I've seen the website and I think it's fantastic. Tell us a little bit about that, what is it, what's it for and how are you working it?

Ally: Our Milk Money is completely and totally free. It's run like a non-profit. So we don't profit from anything there. We don't even collect fees. If you were to purchase anything from one of the parents on there, it's basically a business directory for self-employed parents across the country. The reason I wanted to create it is because I knew how powerful, how valuable, the products and services are that we purchase when we give our money directly to a parent. Especially because those parents made that choice to come home and run a business as well as run their family. That is not easy to do. It's one of the most difficult things to do, to balance running a business and raise a family at the same time. I wanted to make that easier. I figured no one else understands the value except for other parents. So if we're just purchasing from each other and buying from each other, then we can just use our purchasing power, our consumer power, to help build a mini-economy that supports our choice to stay at home.

Brian: I was just actually going to say that it sounds like you're creating your own economy and when you purchase from other people who are in exactly your position, it's a great way to support each other. It's very much like the buy-local movement that a lot of small towns have. I grew up in a really small town in Iowa. There's always this buy-local movement that's really prevalent because a lot of the money seems to drain to the bigger cities. That means that the small town businesses tend to struggle sometimes. It sounds like you're creating that type of environment with this website.

Ally: That's exactly right. It has the same exact premise; the same exact idea.

Brian: That's wonderful. So what kinds of things can people get or purchase? Is it just products? Is it services? Is it a full-scale economy or do you find that some types of businesses lend themselves to something like this?

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Ally: We will list just about anything if you're a parent and you can offer any kind of product or service to your community, whether that be local or even the internet community. There's everything from multi-level marketing, I can buy makeup from Mary Kay and Avon, to there's actually a funeral parlor! It's just a full range of mom and pop home-based businesses.

Brian: Wow! That's really incredible. I've got to tell you, I'm sure this didn't all fall together very cleanly. I'd be willing to bet that. So tell us about some of the kickbacks and obstacles and tensions that happened and what you did about it. Anyone out there who's trying to get a business going might be really inspired by what you're sharing.

Ally: I'm so glad you brought that up because you're right. It's a true challenge and is still a challenge very single day. I didn't get a business degree. I have a college education. My education was in theater and the entertainment industry. I did not learn how to run my own business. I kind of just figured it out as I went along. There's a lot of falling down and making mistakes. To be honest, I'm kind of the belief system that that's kind of what you have to do; that there's no better way to actually learn than to make mistakes and make some bad budget decisions.

Right now I'm trying to figure out taxes. It's a constant challenge. It's a constant struggle. That doesn't mean that it's not absolutely worth the freedom that I've paid for; because, that's priceless in my mind. It's priceless that I get to spend time with my kids and I get to be there to pick them up. That I can at a moment's notice, just take them off to Disneyland. It is absolutely amazing that I have the freedom to do all those things. But I'm still learning and that's part of the radio show, *This Little Parent Stayed Home*. I'm constantly there trying to help parents figure this out and get through it, be their own bosses. But a lot of times I'm just sharing what I've been going through. I'm sharing my journey and what I've discovered as far as budgeting and advertising and all the best ways to grow your business, whether it be just home-based or a little bit larger than that. It's a constant learning process.

Brian: I would imagine that when you're creating a network like this it would be a little easier to barter services back and forth to basically conserve cash flow.

Ally: That is exactly what I talk about all the time. I'm so glad that you said that. Barter is a terrific way to get your business started. So many times parents are afraid to actually quit their corporate jobs because they're afraid to come home. Very often it's because there's a misconception. For example, say they're making \$50,000 a year, and that's just a ballpark average of what I know people can make. So let's say if you're making \$50,000 a year, a lot of parents think that they need to make that up, that exact amount, that \$50,000, in order to be able to successfully afford to come home. That's not necessarily the case.

I actually have a budget form that I give out on my show and I'm always telling people about it. After you deduct all of your business expenses, what you paid for daycare, all of the things that you are paying for, maybe even the cost of going to work, your commuting amount, usually we can get your budget in the negative, between \$200 and \$500 a month. That's a good indication that it's time for you to quit your job and come home because we can easily trade between \$200 and \$500 of service so that you can afford to live at home. That doesn't have to be actual dollars. A great example is when I first came home I wanted to send my son to preschool for just a couple of hours a week. But I couldn't really afford it. I found a mom-and-pop preschool run by a local family. I noticed that they didn't have a newsletter. So I said to them you know I can create a newsletter for you. In exchange will you let my son go here for about four hours a week? They agreed to that. We saved about \$400 a month through barter. Just as you're saying, you can literally triple the value of what you have in the bank and it doesn't have to be a business service that you necessarily have under a business title. You can barter babysitting, dog groom, walk dogs, you can trade clothes. I traded the fact that I knew how to build the newsletter on email marketing. You can trade anything you want and make up that difference.

Brian: You can trade tax preparation for daycare. The possibilities are endless, literally. So were you told at the beginning of this whole process you can't do this because...blah, blah, blah?

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Ally: Oh yes, gosh! And that didn't stop. It wasn't until recently that I really felt like I got the support that I had earned. For years it was all my bosses in corporate America. I think that was just a way to keep me at bay, keep me down. But they told me, oh, you'd never be able to run your own business. You're not capable. You can't handle that. Even people who were amazingly supportive to me *now*, people who love me and want to see me succeed, I kind of get the sense from them that they didn't really trust that I was really going to succeed in what I was doing. Even people who love me, like my parents and my husband and family members, friends, for years I would see them at social events and they'd say, "Are you making any money?" I hated that. That was the worst phrase! We talk a lot about that on my show. I know people weren't trying to be rude. But for years it was, "So, are you making any money?" The ironic thing is that you don't always have to be making money to be successful. I was successful starting it three years ago but I didn't necessarily have the income to show for it. What I had was that I was surviving at home through barter, through how Our Milk Money was exploding. So there's a lot of different ways that equal success. Sometimes the money just comes later.

Brian: A lot of times I think success can be measured by the lifestyle that you achieve by doing the things that you really want to do. Money is a scorecard that a lot of people use and it's important because you need it. It's basically the lubricant that gets you through life because you have allocations. But you can't tie happiness to it.

Ally: Absolutely! And you're right. My goal was to earn money so I could put food on the table. You do have to earn. I am finally in a place where I am able to earn. I'm actually broadcasting from my dream home. My family just moved into it about a month ago. That was because of the success that I have had. But it took years to get here. If you think about it, it only took me four years. That's something to be really proud of. But three years ago I was still kind of in this position where I felt like I had to explain myself and why I wasn't making money yet. That can be really difficult for any person who has started their own business. It's very hard to feel like you're a success when you don't have the dollar amount to show for it right away.

Brian: I'd like to change the gears a bit Ally and talk to you about how parents can balance careers at home with parenting. How do you balance that business and that parenting? I know it's really the thesis of your entire show. What kinds of things do you talk about?

Ally: That is the million dollar question. That is the question that comes up again and again and again, no matter how many times I talk about it. It's still the number one challenge that parents have. How do you balance it? It's very, very hard to do. However, there is a very simple solution. The answer is simply this: when you become your own boss, you need to remind yourself you're the boss. With that said, you are the one that decides when you can work. You are the one that decides what your pace is. You're the one to implement policies that work with you and work with your schedule. Once you finally get a feeling for that, once you finally have acknowledged the fact that you're the boss, you're the one that calls the shots, then it's much easier for you to start saying to people, "I'm sorry. I don't take phone calls during that time. That's the time I've dedicated to my family. Or if I do take a phone call during that time, you need to understand that there will be interruptions because I'm a full-time mom during that time." And there are no apologies. I will not apologize for my kids.

I do have certain rules that I encourage parents to live by, especially if you're self-employed. I can go into them now if you want. Basically they are work with other parents as much as possible, people who will understand and forgive the fact that you are operating at a much slower pace. Number two, never apologize for your kids; never ever apologize for the fact that you've chosen this as a career. Be very proud of the choice that you've made. Number three, we always talk about barter. That's a really big thing. Barter as much as possible. So there are different rules that I'm constantly reminding people of that really do help for us to live in this movement. Parents right now, self-employment, we are a force to be reckoned with. The trends are all in our favor. It's a very exciting time.

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Brian: I love the fact that you have rules that are established because it's your business. There are customers who think that they want to run your rodeo for you. But if you don't want to follow my rules, then you can go do business somewhere else. I used to write resumes and there were one or two customers that I basically had to fire because they were way too demanding for what they were willing to pay me. You give an inch and they'd take a yard and beyond. You just have to decide where you're drawing the lines and what you're willing to put up with.

Ally: That's one of the challenges I've come up with because I don't want to discriminate against my clients. That's money coming in my pocket. But you're right; I do have to make a decision and make a choice to only work with self-employed parents because there's going to be a lot less drama and headache. They always understand if there's a little bit of disruption. They understand that they are not to cancel on me because they already paid for daycare to meet with them. It's amazing how much it comes back to bite me when I break one of my policies and work with somebody who is not a parent or somebody who doesn't understand up front that I have to operate it a certain way.

Brian: Because you have kids, they are the reason you're doing this. It's not, I'm doing the business and I have kids. It's I have kids and I choose to support them in this way. That's how you are operating and I think that's really wonderful. I think it's a great movement. I want to ask how one can contribute to the work-at-home movement and why should you? I mean what's really going on with that, where's it going?

Ally: Let me back up and actually tell you about where the actual idea came from. You know my story about how I came home. I knew that my unemployment was only going to last so long. I was determined to find a way to actually bring in an income for myself. Believe it or not I started making jewelry. That's where I started. I don't make jewelry anymore. At the time I was making jewelry and had these visions of selling online, go to trade shows and sell there. As I was creating a necklace one day I realized that anybody could just buy this necklace. It was pretty nice and I could probably sell it for about \$35. I thought \$35 and it was really nothing special, except the fact that my necklace represented food on the table for my child. It represented a Gymboree class. There was so much I could do if somebody would just purchase this necklace from me. I started thinking of the tremendous value that this little necklace that I made would hold for my family and me. Then I thought what \$35 would mean to a large department store chain, which is nothing. It's just a write-off to them, just pocket change to them. So once I started thinking of that, what the value of my product was, I decided to make a change.

That's kind of the way I am. Be the change you wish to see in the world. So I decided that from now on as I was trying to become self-employed I was going to do everything within my power to use my hard-earned dollars to buy things from other parents, self-employed parents. I began searching for everything that I ever needed to make a purchase on, whether it be food or makeup or household supplies, cleaning supplies, anything, I was on the search for who I could give my money to. Not that I had much money at that point. But I wanted to at least keep it circulating in the self-employed parent group. I was Googling constantly looking for products and trying to figure out if the companies that I was pulling up were owned by families, moms or dads. There was really no way for me to know.

Because I couldn't find it, of course, what do we always do? We create it ourselves! If it's something there's a need for. So that's how I decided to create www.ourmilkmoney.com. I wanted a place, a search directory, where I could find just about anything and I could purchase it and know that my hard-earned dollars were going to support a family 100% of the time. That's when www.ourmilkmoney.com became born. I actually sent out an email to friends and family saying that I was thinking of creating a business directory and I didn't know how I was going to get started. I didn't even know if there was a need for this or if it was just in my head. My email was forwarded hundreds of times and I started getting hundreds of thousands of letters from across the country from people I didn't even know begging me to create the Our Milk Money directory. It was an abundance of need. Because of that I went ahead and created the directory and it's five years later and it's still booming. It's still growing. We add new members every single day. I couldn't be more proud.

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Brian: That's awesome. If someone wanted to join up, how would they do that? Do they just go to your website, www.ourmilkmoney.com?

Ally: Yes, it's very simple. Click on Join and it will pull up an application. All the applications are manually approved by our volunteer staff members. We just want to make sure that you really are a parent, that the business you are working for really is small business. It doesn't take more than five minutes. We approve you and then we have all sorts of other benefits such as we'll spotlight you and your business in our monthly newsletter. We just integrated social media icons so now you can actually list your Facebook fan page and your Twitter account and LinkedIn account. We're constantly updating and expanding. The best part about is that it is free. There are absolutely no hidden charges; there is no cost to you. We just ask you to be as big a contributor as you possibly can by using the directory to shop and contribute to the movement.

Brian: If someone did want to offer some kind of a donation, is that possible?

Ally: Absolutely. We are set up so we can take donations. We're so grateful for the people who do donate. We have been able to keep Our Milk Money afloat just based on donations. We're incredibly excited about that.

Brian: That's wonderful. You talked a little bit about growing. How did you go about publicizing this business? I know for example you write for a lot of publications and now of course you're hosting your radio show, *This Little Parent Stayed At Home*. What kind of a marketing plan did you have or how did you publicize this business in general?

Ally: Like I said earlier, we got hundreds of thousands of emails from people who said yes, please build this business directory. One of the things that I did was I said to the members, this is going to be a free business directory. We don't have a lot of money. We're relying on you to tell your communities about this. People were so excited about what this meant to their families, about what this meant to their businesses, that I really relied on the members themselves to tell everybody about what we were accomplishing. Believe me, as a leader, I knew that it was important that I keep reminding them. I'm constantly reminding them even today; don't forget to tell people in your community that they can find you on the Our Milk Money business directory. I knew the power really was within the members themselves. As far as I was concerned, I was one person. There was only so much I could do. But as a leader I knew that I could inspire all of these hundreds of thousands of people to contribute to the movement. They really have. I wouldn't be anywhere without the members.

Brian: So you contribute to a number of publications. You've also been on television to promote this, is that right?

Ally: That's right. I've had a few segments. Thank goodness, again, for the members. The members themselves are the ones who helped get me these gigs to begin with. They understand that if they're promoting me, if they're promoting me and I represent Our Milk Money, then they're promoting themselves. Again, we're all part of this global movement and if we're all promoting Our Milk Money, we all benefit for it. Yes, I do write for some local magazines. Any chance that I get. There are a lot of people that come to me and want me to contribute an article. I never say no to any of those opportunities. As far as I'm concerned, it's free advertising. Never say no to those kinds of opportunities. We're so lucky when we're presented with those things.

Brian: You never know how you can multiply those for sure.

Ally: Exactly!

Brian: You just never know how it's going to perpetuate itself. You also are a motivational speaker. You speak to women's groups.

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Ally: I do. I've been speaking to a lot of women's groups. I also speak to a lot of parent's groups and even some business groups. But really the number one thing that everybody wants to bring me on board to speak to is how do you balance, going back to what we were talking about before. That's the biggest thing that everybody wants to know from me – how are you able to grow a business and raise a family at the same time. It's two careers really.

Brian: Do you find that's probably the biggest question you get on your show – how do I achieve this balance?

Ally: Yes, that's always the biggest question. No matter how many times I bring it up or talk about it, everybody wants to know. I have learned from my own experiences. I have grown based on falling down and picking myself up and figuring out how to learn from my own mistakes. Everybody has their rock bottom moments – those moments that you're literally at the worst boo-hoo of your life and usually those are the moments that are the greatest gifts, the greatest blessings, because that's when you figure it out. You figure out how to never be there again. My rock bottom moment I'm not at all ashamed to admit was that I lost control of my balance when I first started. I had a breakdown and ended up in the hospital for 72 hours. It was in that moment that I realized I needed to put things in order. I needed to achieve balance. I needed to figure out how I was going to run a business and take care of my family at the same time. That's when I started working on putting different policies into place so that I would never end up in the hospital again. Because I was sharing my story and because I was helping so many parents, I've been thanked tenfold. People will say thank you. You saved me a trip to the mental institution by helping me put things in order and keep balance.

Brian: Your radio show, more specifically, is on Fridays?

Ally: It's 3:00 p.m. PST Fridays, 6:00 p.m. EST.

<http://toginet.com/shows/thislittleparentstayedhome>

Brian: Talk to us a little bit about what kinds of topics you cover. I know you talk about balance between raising your family and staying at home. Are there other topics that sort of fly around that issue that you tend to touch on?

Ally: Yes, it's amazing. I'm about to hit 100 shows. What's incredible is that we'd never repeated a topic except for the balance issue. There's just an abundance of stuff to learn. The reason is because we're all different. We all have different skills and talents. Another big question that is constantly begging to be answered is, what can I do from home? What I can do and what you can do and what that person can do might be completely different, completely different career choices. So we talk about, are you going to bring home your career? Are you going to take your skill set based on what you're already doing for an employer and can you work for yourself based on what you already know? Should you buy into a multi-level marketing or direct sales? Should you try and bring your current career home through telecommuting? There are a wide varieties of ways and we explore all of them on the show.

Brian: It's a completely different market unto itself. There are work-at-home opportunities but you have to be really, really, really careful about what you get yourself into. It is ideal. But if you really like your job with your current company there have got to be ways. If you work for a really supportive employer, they will help you find ways to telecommute.

Ally: That's right and it's a huge trend right now.

Brian: Especially with gas prices being where they are and where they seem to be going. I know a lot of people that would really prefer to work at home. Just for the gas savings itself. I know you talk on your show about what kinds of work-at-home opportunities are out there. Let's first talk about tips on how to be your own boss. What kinds of recommendations do you make?

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Ally: The first thing I do is take a look at your life. What's going on, what assets do you have, what do you already have in your life that you can transition into a career for yourself? It might be as you said before that you can bring your career home. Have you already checked with your boss? So many people have said no, my employer doesn't do that; they don't believe in telecommuting. The simple answer to that is it doesn't mean you can't submit a telecommute proposal. In fact, hundreds of thousands of people across the country submitted a telecommute proposal and there's a whole movement of just that happening right now where they help support each other. They show the value to their employer to let them telecommute two or three times a week. Even on a short-term basis to show them how much money they can save if they don't have to pay for a workstation for them. They are willing to take pay cuts. There are so many different valuable reasons for an employer to actually go into transitioning into telecommute options. That would be ideal. You keep your benefits and can very often keep a decent salary. If that is an option, then that's okay.

Then we take a look at what skill sets are transferable. What kinds of things are you doing for somebody else that you can be doing for yourself? Even that might not be transferable. That might not be an option. But we want to go through and take a look at all the different things you could possibly do from home. Then we take a look at what are your passions? What are you excited about? Do you love scuba diving? Do you want to open up a scuba diving shop? Do you love sewing? Do you want to be a sewing consultant? There are so many different things that you could possibly do based on your likes, dislikes, your knowledge, and your skills. Then we can even take a look at some of the things that you have at home. Do you have a really big back yard? Do you like pets? Maybe you can dog sit. Maybe you can dog groom in your back yard. Maybe you have a really big front yard and you can wash cars in your front yard. You don't have to invent anything. You don't have to create a product that's never been seen before. Although you absolutely can. We talk to people about taking off the pressure about being the newest, latest, greatest. There are so many different things that you can do to earn a supplemental income.

Once you know that, once you have decided to be in that mind set, and you're ready to make some sacrifices, and believe me, that's another thing we talk about on our show, no two ways around it, you're going to have to make sacrifices. You're going to have to be poor for a while. That can be quite scary. But that's what I'm there for to help you get through those scary times and help you get on the other side.

Brian: At the same time, like we talked about before, you have to draw lines. There have to be some things that you will absolutely not compromise on at all. You have to know what those things are too.

Ally: Especially if you're married. Very often they are not on the same page. That's another thing we're constantly dealing with – how to actually get on the same page. The wife wants to come home; the husband is saying no, we can't afford to lose your income. How do we get on the same page? How do we agree on what is best for the family? There's a lot of different ways to understand how to do that. Very often if we are making sacrifices, if we're cutting things out of the budget, that doesn't mean they are cut for all of time. As you start bringing in more income, you will start to see what kinds of things you want to put back into the budget, which things you've really missed. For me, it was the housekeeper.

Brian: Let's talk a little bit about running your family like you run your business. I know that if you're juggling a business and juggling raising your family, at some point the two begin to look a little bit alike. Is it okay if you're running your family like a business or vice versa?

Ally: Yes, it is. Actually it benefits everybody. The kids learn so much by watching you work, by getting involved, by helping to write policies. It really is a benefit to actually run everything like a business, believe it or not. That doesn't mean you have to be cold and corporate-like. What it does mean is that you put policies in place that everybody abides by and help them understand why these policies are there to begin with. Unfortunately one of the biggest challenges that we experience as a self-employed parent is that everybody has this misconception that our time is more flexible than everybody else because we don't have to report to a job. We don't have to report to a career. Our time, our schedule,

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has to be completely organized in order for it to work. So when I say run your family like a business, what I mean by that is be a leader. Be a leader in your life, be a leader in your family. Create a schedule that works for your family and make sure that people know that just because can be more flexible does not mean that they should treat your time as less important.

Brian: That's a really great thing because I tell you what, for those people who are working for someone else, it's a different world than working for yourself. You get to make your own schedule; yet if you're not disciplined to keep it, if you don't have rules that you have others abide by, if they don't respect it, that can make things very challenging. You have to put yourself in a quiet place where you're not distracted and you've got your schedule and you know what you're doing. You have your priorities in place. Let's talk a little about what you feel are the qualities that are best suited to running a business. Would you recommend to some people that owning your own business isn't a good idea? Or do you think that somehow, some way, everyone can do it?

Ally: That's a great question. I would have said five years ago that I would have told you I wasn't capable, it wasn't in my blood, I couldn't be my own boss. Now, because I am and am very successful, I am of the mind that anybody can do it – absolutely. However, not everybody knows that they can do it. You do really need to know that you can otherwise you are going to be very confused about what you have to take on. Sometimes we shut down. I know that I shut down when I do any amount of bookkeeping. We all know what our weaknesses are. It is important for you to know that really anybody can do this.

However, there are different levels. You don't have to run an enormous organization like what I created with Our Milk Money. You can very easily be a virtual assistant, you can be a consultant, and you can do sewing, hem for people in the neighborhood. You don't have to be a huge business. This is just bringing in a supplemental income for yourself. If that scares you and you want the support, there's all these multi-level marketing, direct sales companies. Some are legitimate and some are not. We talk about how to see the red flags and how to know what's right for you. Even with the most legitimate ones, it's all about sales. So you need to know that going in. It's wonderful to have a support network. I like calling it Business in a Box because very often it's just \$100 and you get everything you need up front. But before you go into that, are you ready to sell to your friends and family? Very often, that's what it entails. If you're not somebody who is going to thrive in that environment, then it may not be the right opportunity for you.

Brian: There are other ways to promoting a business other than just talking to your friends and family. It's a place to start. Some people aren't comfortable doing that. Twitter has made me really bold. I'm Tweeting all the time. Ally is my Twitter coach so she knows this very well. Let's talk a little bit about promoting your business on Twitter. I know this can be a subject for an entirely different show all by itself.

Ally: It's amazing. I hated Twitter when I first started. I heard people raving about it and I didn't get it at all. I was more of a Facebook girl because Facebook is very slow paced and relaxed. But Facebook does not drive traffic to your business the way Twitter can. Just like you, I have a radio show and I was very proud of it. I knew that I had good content; I had a very loyal but small following of listeners. I was determined to find new listeners. I knew if I could get people there that they would probably stick. So one night I was tweeting away and trying all these different components like a math equation. I figured out that with these three components that I could drive traffic by the thousands to my podcast. I stayed up till 4:00 in the morning doing it. I was afraid that if I stopped that somehow the internet police were going to shut me down, like a broken slot machine in Vegas. It's been a year and a half and I'm using those same components and now people are hiring me to learn how to drive traffic to their own radio shows and YouTube channels and their blogs. So far it's working for everybody and I'm really excited about it.

Brian: It's a great place to start a conversation, a great way to meet people, and to establish some relationships. I love the way you describe Twitter like a loud cocktail party where people are screaming across the room at each other and no one is listening to anyone.

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Ally: That's exactly right. I pride myself on how I coach people because most people when they are learning about social media, one of the things that they don't want is to be talked to in technical terms. I do try to talk in analogies such Facebook is the backyard barbeque and Twitter is the overcrowded cocktail party where everybody's talking at once and no one is listening to each other.

Brian: How can we get a hold of you if we want to listen to your show or get on your website or connect with you or even hire you as a speaker?

Ally: You can go to www.ourmilkmoney.com if you're a self-employed parent. Go ahead and put in an application and if you fall under the criteria, we're happy to approve you. Also you can find me on Toginet.com. The name of my show is *This Little Parent Stayed Home*. You can find me on iTunes very simply. If you're interested in my coaching services, I have a website called www.ThisLittleParent.info and there's an abundance of information there, including how you can reach me if you want to coach with me privately. I also do free coaching on my radio show for anyone who can't afford my coaching privately. It's a great way to get free coaching.

Brian: Thank you for joining us on Success Profiles Radio.