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Home Business Success – The Wicked Way By Liz Folger

What you're about to hear is a story of a very determined, and some might even say 'crazy' woman, Angela Parker. And Angela will be the first to warn you, "...I don't recommend others, especially those with small children and no life-partner, to take this path. It's not an easy path." So basically those with a bad heart or health condition should probably consult with a doctor before trying such an adventure.

So here you have it, single mother to three kids, Angela Parker; unemployed with just \$5000 in her savings to live off of, and little if any support from her kid's dad. Angela and her family were living in a small trailer in the middle of nowhere, and for some crazy reason, Angela thought she could make a virtual assistant (VA) business idea of hers work.



Angela Parker

It wasn't always this way though. Angela worked as a coordinator for the Central Kentucky Cancer Program, and was the administrative assistant to the President of the Ephraim McDowell Foundation, the not-for-profit fundraising arm of a regional medical center located in Danville, Kentucky. However, she left this job. Angela explains, "I didn't feel that I would be able to advance, and my ambitions were outpacing the position. I wanted to continue to stretch and learn." Angela was about ready to do a bit of stretching and learning that is for sure.

Like many of us, Angela wanted to work for herself so she could have more control over her life. "I knew I wanted to live a life that was more "in tune" with who I was and what I was all about. It wasn't just a career move; it was a life overhaul for me. It was a purposeful decision to make a sweeping change."

After Angela left her job she went to work for the Census. In a matter of weeks she got a promotion. She went from field worker (taking census data) to a supervisor of others in that same position. Angela explains, "I liked working with the people and coming up with new ways to organize the work to make it more efficient for my workers, for myself, and for my own supervisor."

During this time Angela was able to work at home. The Census field workers would come to her home office and review their progress. She loved it because she was there for her children. She didn't have to put her daughter in daycare and she was there when her boys got home from school. Also, it should be mentioned that during this time Angela was in the middle of a divorce.

Working at home was new for Angela, "I liked being there for the children, but I'd never been a "stay at home" kind of woman. I have always required a challenge, and I knew that I needed a career for ME." She goes on to explain, "I believe that being a good mother is the best thing I'll ever do, and the hardest thing to truly accomplish - but I still needed more. I needed to succeed on a professional level too."

It was about this time Angela stumbled onto the world of virtual assisting. Angela was able to take that geek in her that loved computers, her love of organizing material and making peoples lives more efficient, and the need to live in the country and create for herself her perfect business/lifestyle.

Angela saw a job opportunity in Kentucky that was willing to pay pretty well to do outsource work for them (AKA Virtual Assisting). Angela says, "I decided I could have my cake and eat it too. I could work, have a career, be at home when the kids arrived from school, AND live in the woods."

Angela decided to make it happen. She sold her house, moved her family to a little farm in the middle of nowhere, and purchased a second-hand trailer. And she lived happily ever after. Well not quite...

What Angela wasn't expecting was getting fired from her VA job. There were a lot of issues with her phone line getting installed and anyone who is a VA would know without a phone line, it can be very hard to work. Who would believe, especially the company she was working for, that it could take 29 days to get a phone line installed?

She really tried to make it work though. While juggling her time with her kids, and the 80+ mile round-trip three days a week where she was borrowing an Internet connection from her parents, Angela still found herself jobless.

Angela doesn't know if it was confidence, stubbornness, or stupidity that kept her going after her dream. Lack of funds and support from family didn't derail her. A few months after being fired from her outsourcing job she started her own virtual assistant business called Wicked Word Craft.

Getting those first few clients was not easy, but after her story would you expect otherwise? Angela wondered if the clients would ever come. She explains, "Those first clients are the toughest. Your confidence level is so low when you start out. Every day you think 'Can I really do this?' and 'What if I'm wrong? What if I can't make it work? What if I fail?'"

Angela found that it does come, as long as you keep at it. Angela says, "It comes, it eventually works out as long as you don't give up, and as long as you put in the hours toward building your business every day, even when you don't have clients to serve."

If you're thinking of starting your own Virtual assistant business Angela recommends the following:

- Accurately assess your skills and your abilities to run a business.
- It's a marathon, not a sprint. If you need to take some business classes, do it.
- Hire specialists to handle the areas where you don't shine (it will cost you less in the long run).
- Niche your services. Specialize.
- Keep customer service the top priority.
- Network with others in your field.
- And most importantly, do what you ENJOY most.

Angela has since remarried, she has paid off her 25 acres in full, has almost finished her "dream" cabin, and is very happy working at home as a VA. She is a wonderful example of what determination can accomplish. Being a single mom, living in a small trailer with three kids, little money, and living on rice and beans and clothes from the Goodwill wasn't enough to make Angela quit her dream.

For those of you who aren't finding support from your family and friends here's Angela's advice...

There are often times when you don't have the support of others. That's life. It's easier if you have support and you should seek it from family first, friends second. If, however, you don't find it either of those places, find a network of like-minded individuals experiencing some of the same challenges that you face. Online or offline, these relationships are invaluable. And if you really want something, don't ever give up. It will come, but you will probably be tested a number of times to be sure it's REALLY what you want. Pass those tests. Keep working. It will come.

Angela Parker is the owner of WickedWordCraft.com

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