

Laylee: If you are battling burnout or you've been burnt out before, if you are pivoting into a new idea or trying to create a new idea, this episode is a great one to listen to. I chat with Angela Shea of Social Templates Co and we are talking all about her entrepreneurial journey, how she went from being super burnt out to creating Social Templates Co, which is an incredible membership that now has over 2000 members.

Over on Instagram, it creates real templates, and just make social media super, super easy for everybody involved. I actually have a free month to offer all my listeners. You can use code Lely and we will link everything for you guys, but I hope that you love this conversation that I had with Angela.

It was very, very real. It was very honest and heartfelt, and I just am so thankful that she chose to share her journey with us as well as a little bit behind the scenes of social templates.

Laylee: Hey friends, welcome back to the show. Today, I am so excited to have my friend Angela Shea of Social Templates Co. on with us. We are going to be talking about a lot of different things today.

I met Angela at the hybrid collective conference and it was a photography conference that we were both speaking at. Actually, were you speaking or sponsoring?

Angela: sponsoring.

Laylee: Sponsoring. But I mean, it's such a great community. It's one of those places where everybody meets each other and becomes fast friends.

And I got to hear a lot of Angela's story. Actually like fireside. It was like an actual fireside chat. We were sitting around the fire and I just loved hearing her entrepreneur's story about her journey on how she went from photographer who was like killing it as a wedding photographer, she was full of destination shoots, like just.

Amazing, amazing photographer earning all these features in Brides, Style Me Pretty, Junebug Weddings, Magnolia Rouge, all like the top photography places that you could be featured. But she started feeling some burnout and I'm not going to give too many spoilers here, but that was kind of like, The beginning of her company, which is incredible.

I'm actually a user. So we'll talk about that too, but Angela. I want to hear from you, like all about your entrepreneurial journey. And I'm going to be asking some questions along the way. I feel like our listeners so often have incredible ideas, but just struggle to get them from idea. To creation and to see the potential in trying something new.

and you've just done such a beautiful job of it. So welcome to the show. Tell us all about yourself.

Angela: Thank you. Thank you so much for having me on. I am so excited this is happening and I'm so excited that we met in person at that fireside conversation. It was like instant connection. Like, we were like, okay, we're meant to be friends. so I was a wedding photographer for over a decade. I started out really young.

I was 19 and straight out of high school, actually. I started shooting my, sisters, uh, friends, senior portraits. And so then within a few years, they were like getting married. And then I started shooting their, And so I wasn't really sure what I was doing. I didn't plan to be a photographer. I was actually applying for a dental hygienist program.

And then I remember like that exact moment I was walking to submit my application and I had all my, Prerequisites done and I turned around halfway down the hall and I'm like who am I kidding like there's no way I can submit this I don't want to do dentistry and I walked away and then enrolled in like the graphic design program just on a whim.

My parents were like, wait. What happened? Like, I was supposed to be the dentist in the family, I don't think I've ever even shared this publicly ever. Um, but walked away from that and started photography. never had any type of like education in it, learned everything on my own. But it was a fun and wild ride because I was so young and I would, just put all my free time and energy into learning and shooting everything I could shoot.

And, it quickly took off and I loved what I was doing. I remember saying I could never not shoot weddings. Like that was my favorite thing in the world. it was just like, My favorite, favorite thing ever. And so when I started having kids, which I also wanted to be a really young mom, I wanted to be the young, fun mom.

And, I was like, I can do both. I can have kids and I can have this business. And then I loved the idea of like. photography, giving me the flexibility to do that.

but we all know, and especially if there's moms out there listening that are trying to run a small business and raise kids, like it, we romanticize that idea.

I think a lot of how, like, you could be at home and do all the things, but quickly you realize, like, your kids really need you to be present physically and emotionally. and then also there's like so many things that your business needs from you. Where it feels like you. just constantly are working on something all the time.

and so that's kind of what happened. I had little kids and I was, pulling all nighters editing. So my editing hours would be from about 9 p. m. to 4 in the morning, sometimes 5. So that was like a regular for me. I would do a Dutch brothers run get a coffee at 9 PM. and I would work through the night and then my kids would be up by like six or seven.

And so it was, you know, just this really rough few years where I was trying to do it all. And then on top of that was traveling. more than 50 percent of my weddings were destination outside of our area. And so it just quickly became one of those things where, I just started really, I doubting myself as an artist.

It felt like my work just did not meet my own unrealistic expectations, maybe. Or, you know, every shoot I remember coming back and, like, dissecting it. And instead of being like excited about the images I got, it was like, I was always so disappointed with what else I could have should have done.

and then the anxiety of that just kind of started really destroying me. I started having anxiety attacks, which was not something I've ever experienced prior to that. I remember just feeling like suffocating. and then on top of that, being such a young mom. And I mean, this was. At least 12 years ago now, but even, dealing with postpartum blues and figuring out, like, who I am as this young 22 year old mom, and I think emotionally, like, I just was not in a healthy place on top of, like, just getting burnt out with work.

Anyways, long story short, I had one dinner conversation with my husband and we were like, all right, we can't keep going like this. We sold our house within a week. So we had one dinner conversation. Our house was on the market. We sold it within the week. it was a good time to sell and packed up her life and moved to Southern California.

So from the Pacific Northwest to Southern California, with no plan, like I took down my website. we didn't even see the apartment we were moving to in person at all. Like, we were just winging it. And we were gonna do it for a

season, so whatever the season was gonna look like, maybe a year, year and a half, maybe two years maximum.

But we were just gonna do like a little reset. I need a sabbatical. From just everything I was experiencing and I just wanted to, be with my kids and be on the beach and just have a reset. So we moved to Southern California. I had no plan of what I was going to do. And since I've already built up a good community of friends in the industry, that people started reaching out and being like, Hey, so what are you doing these days?

I know you're not shooting anymore. can you help with my social media? So I started taking on clients for social media management. this was about seven years ago, almost eight now. so this was when the perfectly curated grid was at its peak. you know, making sure your grid looks like a curated portfolio, all the colors match and relate to the brand.

And I was really good at doing that. And so I started managing preset companies and other fine art photographers and quickly ramped up 20 clients that I was managing a month. So I went from being burnt out as a photographer to, okay, well now I run 20 Instagram accounts. And absolutely no days off because everybody's content had to get posted.

I remember trying to, later on figure out that I wanted Sundays off. I'm like, I need at least one day a week off where I'm not on Instagram and making sure all this content is getting posted. and so, I was managing those Instagram accounts and then, TikTok. And 2020 happened and everybody wanted reels and we were custom creating reels at that point.

So I ended up building, a small, social media management agency. I brought on some help. I had a few girls helping me with getting all the content prepped and we started creating manually all these reels. For all of our clients, and it was the same thing over and over, but it was custom and you only get to post it once and nobody gets to use that same content ever again, which felt like such a waste.

And I was like, there has to be a way where you can, add in like more content and, have other people be able to use this in some capacity. And so we were looking for solutions and nothing quite fit. Like exactly what I was looking for. And so that's how social templates was born. and what it is today is just out of sheer desperation and need for some sort of solution.

And we created basically a plug and play real templates that are right inside of Instagram. So it's not another app. we found that it was, easier with music

licensing, and we can use all the trending audios, which is what everyone wanted. To capitalize on the trending audios. So we're actually a private Instagram account for our members only that houses all of the real templates right inside of Instagram.

And so that's what we do now. We create templates and we release new ones every single week. So we've been building that community for the last two years now.

Laylee: That's amazing. Honestly, first of all, I can't believe that it's grown so much in two years. I mean, how many members you have? A lot. I mean, I'm in there. You have a ton of members.

Angela: So I think we have, close to a thousand users right now.

Laylee: That's wild. Like a thousand users in a monthly subscription that's only been around for two years, but that has such a huge content library and is so easy to use. And it's honestly one of those ideas where. You really look at it and you're like, Oh, well, duh, this is a brilliant idea. Like, of course it's going well, but I love that you came up with a concept based off of a need that you yourself and your clients were experiencing.

I mean, there's so much I want to talk about within your story summary, but I love that you had an idea and you acted on it and I'd love to hear more about like that process for you. Was it scary? I mean, so you had burnt out. You were having anxiety attacks.

You were feeling like all the negative feelings of burnout. And then you take the sabbatical, you burn out again, essentially double burnout, which in your defense, I think most of us who run our own businesses and are entrepreneurial, we are entrepreneurial and we are like that. Like if you're predisposed to burning out, you're going to probably struggle with that repeatedly through life.

Even in this season, do you experience times of burnout within this company?

Angela: An seven for any of those that are into the Enneagram. So I tend to romanticize my life more than not.

Laylee: which I love. I wish I had that. I don't do that.

Angela: So, you know, especially so going through that like anxiety and all the negative stuff was like really hard for me as a seven because that's when you

know, you're like, you've hit your lowest low. but with the journey, as far as social templates and where we are today, it actually wasn't as seamless as I like to just, you know, share about it.

It was a quite. devastating, I think journey at points, where I thought it wasn't going to succeed and I was going to walk away. And so social templates is what it is right now. we're just about to hit our two year. but before that, I actually tried different ways of figuring out how I can serve photographers through reels specifically.

So originally our first model of social templates, was a failure. And I think maybe I've only shared this once before ever, and maybe for the people that have been following on Instagram, they might remember, but I think the pivot was so smooth. A lot of people didn't really notice what happened.

but basically, the first model was a Shopify store. So we would create these sample example reels and put them into a store front and you could browse the store and pick out a template that you like. If you liked the audio and you liked the style, then you would select the template, you would upload your content I guess to that item, it's kind of like if you were printing a t shirt and you could add your own designs. So you would pick out this template, add your own files and then submit it to us. And on the back end, I had an editor on standby, a video editor that would turn around and create a reel within 24 hours.

And we would send it back to the photographers. So, I mean, talk about like a complex system. So constantly had to be updating our library so that there's new fun templates available. And then photographers would go and browse what they liked and then send us their files, which was, I think, what was the biggest barrier.

We noticed that in order for them to find the files, find the videos, upload them, send them to us. It was just taking so much time that at that point they might as well just sit down and create their own reel. And it was expensive. So we had to pay our video editor, and we had to make it affordable for photographers.

And so we weren't making money, right?

So that model, we launched it and there was definitely a lot of interest, which was good. So we're like, there's obviously a demand for this type of solution, but it wasn't working. And so we were still trying to kind of figure out how we can make it easier and get more photographers excited about this.

And then Instagram launched the, use template feature, which is what we build our templates off of now. So when I first saw the use template feature announced and launched, I cried for probably two days straight. I was so devastated. I was like, we've been building the solution and now Instagram just comes out and basically now you can do right instead of Instagram.

People don't need to send us their files. And I was crushed and devastated because I was like, I finally felt like I had figured out like what the industry needs. And now this is just getting kind of like ripped away from us. And you know, it was needed, I think, to like release that you know, and cry about it and just kind of stress for two days.

And then, I think I was in the shower or wherever all my good ideas come to me. I was like, why am I so upset about this? Like, we can take this feature and we can completely like change our entire business model to work with this feature. Like use that as like a blessing and, turn it into something that's like completely revolutionize our industry and revolutionize our business.

And so once it all clicked for me, we started testing and I was like, Oh my gosh, this is going to be so much easier. Like, this is the most perfect solution for people that don't want to leave the app that want to create within the app. And like, we were able to use all the audios and the music licensing issues were no longer a problem.

Like it was the best thing that happened basically. For us, but when it just happened, I was crushed. I thought we were just going to walk away.

Laylee: Yeah. I mean, I don't blame you because hearing the story and putting myself into your shoes, I'm thinking, and I think our listeners can agree. It's one of those things where it's like, you feel like somebody took your idea and gave it to the masses and you're like, I've been killing myself trying to make this thing work.

And so I get that your first response, and for some people, I think this is like a key lesson here is that for some people they would take that and they would let it stop them and they would say, well, they're already doing it. I'm not going to do it. Like Instagram's already doing it. I'm done. Like we're done, but you did it.

You did a pivot and made it work in your favor. And now look at like, I just, I love that lesson of how can you take something that seems like the worst thing

that can happen and make it work for you? Not against you. Like, I love that. That's so cool.

Angela: I mean, I feel like if somebody would have told me then that like, Hey, two years down the line, this is what your business is going to look like. It would have been hard to believe, but like in the middle of it all, I just remember, I wanted to walk away. Like I was ready to, to throw in the towel on that.

Cause I was like, well. Exactly what you said.

Laylee: Yeah. Oh my gosh. I just think that is so encouraging for so many people even I'm thinking of myself, at the time that we're recording this, I'm currently working on a launch for my first membership that I've never had. So by the time this goes out, it will have been live for a few months, hopefully.

And think all the time, like of, obviously we think of our worst case scenarios, right? Okay. So if this doesn't succeed, what happens if this was to fail, what happens? And I always like to say. You know, business is nothing if you're not failing sometimes. So, I try really hard not to work from a fear of failure, but I love that you've shared this lesson so that I can have it in my mind.

And our listeners can have it in their mind that maybe before you're calling it, maybe before you say this was a failure. There's an opportunity to restructure.

Angela: yeah, and I think giving yourself even time to just like sit with that disappointment is okay too. Because sometimes as entrepreneurs, we feel like we just have to keep going, right? Keep going, keep pushing, like, don't stop. and not even allowing yourself to kind of process. And I think that probably is what helps.

Laylee: Yeah. Do you think that like having the idea for social templates, obviously it was born of all of the problems that you were having, but do you think that the sabbatical helped you in a way? Like, do you think that your brain had freed up some space by cutting back on the work that it was full of before?

Angela: well, at the time that social templates was born, I think I was actually pushed to my max with my Instagram management now. So at that point, I was already, working about 14 hour days while I had two little kids that I was also homeschooling. and so I was pushed to the max, where it was like, I either need social media to figure out how to do this differently or I can't keep going like this It was like almost like another one of those situations in my life where I was like We need a hard change like something really needs to change.

in order for me to keep going and Honestly for all the entrepreneurs out there I wish I had discovered Like a subscription or a membership type model You

So even with our Instagram management accounts, like they were technically on a monthly retainer, but they could cancel in 30 days. Like, they just had to give us a 30 day notice and they could cancel.

And they were like bigger contracts, right? So if you lose one client, it like really affects how much you're going to make the next month. so there's like a stressor there versus building something that can serve, You know, a bigger audience and, you know, there's always a turn on memberships or subscriptions and giving yourself, you know, room for that, but also then you can focus on creating like a really great service or a really great product, for your community.

And that's just the one thing that I wish I had, like, figure it out earlier. It's not that I didn't know. I just didn't think that I could do it. Like it was for the techie guys, or I don't know, like for software companies and so I just never saw myself as someone that was the right fit to run a company like that or to have a company like that.

and so if that gives anybody any ideas, if you're in the middle of like pivoting or trying to figure out how to serve your, communities, like something like this. Um, I feel like it's just so much more sustainable and then you're able to build out a team that we are not just the only person serving them.

And I don't know, I, I wish that's something I knew earlier. Yeah,

Laylee: would you have any advice for somebody who's thinking, okay, I'm either on the edge of burnout or I feel completely burnt out, like what are ways now that you prevent that for yourself now that you've experienced it multiple times and you have what's probably a demanding company and also you have even more kids now and you're still homeschooling.

Right. So you still have a pretty busy schedule.

Angela: I've got a baby on my hands now. yeah, so I think making hard, rules, right? And within your rhythms where you're like this, doesn't change not depending on like my workload. So Sundays I take off. It's just one of those days where, I rest. I think I've might've mentioned this book before.

but, the book that I read that really transformed my life was Ruthless, Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer. And it just really kind of puts in

perspective, how like when we hurry and we're doing things in a hurry, we're not our best selves. We are harsh with people around us. and it also makes a really big emphasis on having a day of rest.

Whatever day you want it to be. you know, Sundays you're traveling for weddings, make Monday your day of rest. Where you just do things for yourself. You know, take your morning coffee out on the porch and you take it slow and you just sit and you allow yourself to process because, I think you asked earlier, like, if I had like more space in my brain to think of things, I noticed that any time I was trying to force myself to business plan or strategize or figure out with solutions, I just felt so stuck a lot and then I would go and do a Pilates class.

And I'd come back and I'd hop in the shower and all of a sudden, like all my ideas were coming to me in the shower because you're not actively thinking about it. You're just kind of allowing your body to rest. And I think that's when the creative ideas, they come to you when you're not forcing it and you have space to just kind of let your mind.

Laylee: I did a poll a little bit ago or one of those like question boxes on my stories. It was like, where do you get your best ideas? Because for me, it's on walks or, you know, and everybody's, it was like a hundred percent of the time it was when you're not focusing on it.

And that's a big reason I love to go on like working retreats and taking time out of my, you know, work. Work office and building that time in. I feel like I love the concept of doing it weekly. I need to read that book. And I wrote it down when you told me at hybrid and I forgot to buy it.

So I'm going to literally add it to cart today.

Angela: note, I also do a lot of beach walks, so that helps with my mental state. So, I feel like the anxiety part is just going to be a part of my being. Now moving forward, and it's just learning how to regulate that and, like noticing like, okay, I'm feeling off and it's time for a break. And we live only 15 minutes from the beach, which is why we did the dramatic move and we actually never went back.

So it was supposed to be first season. We're not going back. We're here to stay. but, um, just having that freedom to be able to just watch the sunset, go walk, go be barefoot. We're breathe like a lot of that is what's been contributing to my

mental state. And, just, I think listening and being aware with your body, like something I'm feeling off, right.

And feeling like, all right, this is a time to step away because we are better business owners and we provide better work if there is that space. To rest and to recharge and to just go be in nature and if it's not the beach, you know It's maybe the forest behind your house or a patch of grass in your backyard, you know Whatever the situation.

Laylee: I agree with that a hundred percent. And I feel like I'm so jealous that you have the beach, but I do my daily walk while I can't do a daily walk these days because it is massively hot here in Texas, but I try to, if I can get outside at some point, I try to get outside, like you said, a patch of grass in your backyard, like just stand out there for a minute, it does, it immensely helps.

So I'm, I'm so glad that you shared that. I'd love to just also hear a little bit about social templates, because I know that obviously crafted around photographers, but as somebody who's in the membership and sees it, I am able to kind of like. Utilize it for my business, which is not photography.

And so I was just curious if you could speak to that a little bit. I mean, I feel like the cool thing about the creation of social templates for you is that you created it as a solution to a problem to create more freedom for yourself and working with your clients. But now you've created all this freedom for these 2000 people in the membership.

Like it's such a beautiful ripple effect of the impact that you're creating for others. And I would just love to hear a little bit more about that as well.

Angela: Thank you. Thank you for saying that and I think that's like what brings tears to my eyes, and I think one of the things that brings tears to my eyes is like when we're at conferences and people come up to us, especially, moms, and they're like, you know what, this gave me freedom to spend more time with my kids. I don't feel like I have to be tied down to my phone, trying to beat match the photos to the music, and you know, not just moms, but just seeing, other photographers being able to get so much freedom you know, with their life, so social templates, specifically for like the wedding industry and photographers and creatives of all kinds.

As long as you have content. So the reason we kind of started with marketing to photographers was first of all, I obviously knew the space really well. but also

because there's always like an overwhelming amount of content. And so, a little spoiler here, we're going to be expanding into more different niches.

not just photography. We're going to have like sub, accounts that focus on creating templates to fit like other types of industries, like the real estate and, other types of small businesses. But the templates that we have, in the community today. So first of all, every week we release seven to 10 new templates.

So there's new content being dropped every single week for our members based off of the trending audios that are currently trending. which you don't have to be stuck using the trending audios, but if you are one of those people where like it's really important for you and we encourage using trending audios because we think it kind of helps with your content being seen more. But with the new templates that get dropped, we always try to hit different categories. So there's always something that's just like a photo dump, like photo heavy slideshow. For anyone that doesn't have any video content or they don't have time to create or even if you have like a fun trip to Europe and you want to do a bunch of photos that's more engaging than like a carousel post.

and then we also do stuff that shows a little bit behind the scenes and then the final photos, it could be anything. It could be you setting up for a conference, right? Here's the setup and then here's like some highlight. Key moments from the event so it doesn't have to be specifically a photo shoot or specifically for a photographer It's seeing the template and then thinking about it in a way of like how can my content be positioned in there?

How can I package my content to you know, look a certain way and I think my favorite ones are the ones They're a little bit more vlog style. So they're Perfectly beat matched, which is something we do manually. It's not like an AI beat matching. So we beat match everything with the vlog style ones, they're longer like, clips that are two to three seconds or sometimes one to three seconds long where you can pop in a short video and it's like a compilation of videos you can stitch together that shows.

A day in a life or highlights from a trip or highlights of maybe you in the office behind the scenes of a work day or whatever and so it's just grabbing those and if the audio, you know, feels like it's on brand, then you can just drop in your content and make any real and the part is that you can add text like we don't include text in the templates, so you could make it yours in any way you want, you know?

Drop in your text and add a call to action and it's yours.

Laylee: I think it is such a great tool for people who are wanting to up their social media game, wanting to share more things. I know for myself and my team, we loved, I love to share as much as I can, but it definitely takes a backseat. So I, think it's just. Such a no brainer for anybody who wants to try it.

And actually, if you guys want to try it, if our listeners want to try, I have a code for a free month and I will make sure to link everything in the show notes. And if you're watching on YouTube in the description, but you can use my name lately for a free month. And. Give it a month and you'll be obsessed.

I think it's just such a great tool. And I love that you said you just have to have the content. And I think for so many of us, I actually have an overload of content at this point because it took such a backseat, the posting that I can go back now and create so many reels so quickly. okay. So I really wanted to take a second to talk about.

The actual products, because I really love it. And whenever I love things, people know, I like to talk about it. And I like never shut up about it. But, as we wrap up this episode, I feel like we learned so much about you and your story. we always wrap up with an unpopular opinion, but in this case, because we did touch on social media and then of course, about your whole journey, and entrepreneurship.

Do you have an unpopular opinion you want to share with our audience?

Angela: Ah! the one thing I strongly believe is I there's unpopular opinion right now around the hustle culture and hustling really hard. And I 100 percent believe in hustling, but I believe even more in like a balanced lifestyle and having more rhythm.

And I encourage the hustle. But I encourage you more to, like, slow down and create those intentional spaces of rest. And not just rest, intentional spaces, to connect with people that matter. Because I think my biggest fear in life is, like, dying and then people saying, Oh, she worked real hard. She was a really hard worker.

Or, you know, Just like using the work attributes to describe me would be horrible. It would feel like I failed in life and Sometimes I think in the hustle and the grind that becomes priority Because we're just go go go and I'm not perfect here. This is I think something I'm constantly working on But I want to

make sure that like in the middle of it all I don't lose My connection with my sisters and my kids and my spouse and the friends, you know, be really Unfortunate to create something amazing and you know build this Wonderful business and then lose all my friends along the way because I was too busy.

So that's my unpopular opinion is Maybe creating healthier balances and hustling, but not, in a way that destroys your relationships.

Laylee: Oh my gosh. I think you probably have some people crying in the car. Um, is there anything like me and listening on their drives? that was beautiful. And I, I just, I honestly love following along with you on, not just on social templates, obviously, but on your own account and seeing your travels and how you prioritize your community, but you also prioritize your community of social templates and your people there.

And you just. I feel like you do prioritize your people and I love seeing that because I think we're so aligned in that. So thank you for sharing so much of your story and like telling us things you've only told like a couple other places. That means so much to me. and I hope that everybody will go check out everything that you have to offer.

Like I said, we will post everything in all the places, but, where can people like follow along with you and your journey as well? Angela. I

Angela: I think the best way to connect is on Instagram at [socialtemplates. co](https://www.instagram.com/socialtemplates), that's our public account, that's like where we hang out, that's where I hang out, I answer all the DMs. come connect there, our website is also [socialtemplates. co](https://www.socialtemplates.co), if you wanted to check out and try the 30 days for free.

Laylee: This was so great. I literally adore you and I, I'm sure we'll see each other at another conference soon and hopefully our listeners will join us as well.

Angela: Thank you, thank you so much.