

**Laylee:** is joining me today to talk all about running a soft business. Now she's going to tell us what all that means and what it entails, but if you've ever struggled to uncover what parts of your story to share, how to incorporate that into your business, how to find clarity in your business. If you've ever experienced burnout.

All of this episode is going to be for you. It is such a great conversation and she is an incredible educator, speaker, and multi passionate creative. I know you're going to love this one because I personally loved the chat that we had. Enjoy.

**Laylee:** Hey friends, welcome back to. So here's the thing today. I'm joined with the lovely Molly Balint. She is a business mentor, a speaker. She's multi passionate like many of us. And most importantly, and what she's here to talk about today is she is the Soft business movement. Soft is an all caps, you guys, which we love in all caps moment.

Um, she helps women who are ready to ditch hustle culture and create a soft business of their own when that's fluid and flexible and that values both profitable business online and a beautiful life offline, which sounds extremely aligned to everything. I believe in, if you've been here for a hot minute, you know that I so believe that your life and your business can be purposeful and profitable, and it can be.

Restful and all the things. So I'm excited. I'm selfishly excited to hear about what a soft business means to you, Molly, and to have everybody learn from you. and I, I just, I just can't wait. So let's dive in, tell us all about yourself and let's just start talking about what a soft business is. But first tell me about like your life, your journey, your business.

**Molly:** well, hello. I'm glad to be here. I am a business coach and an Instagram strategist and a speaker, but I have sort of claimed to have found this thing called the soft business movement. And really, I think it sort of came from a place where I always felt very different about how I viewed like social media.

I really have a lot of my background in social media strategy and I really have always had this honestly sort of a love hate relationship with it. I recognize the power of it. I recognized how there was so much opportunity here to grow a business, but at the same time I really value. Being offline and I value time with my family and I value, you know, just creativity and hobbies and just being present.

And so I really have always sort of taught and even in my own business, tried to be strategic and smart so that my. Offline life is just as important to me as my business, because I love my work and I could do it all the time if I'm not careful. so that's really like, I know that's really like where it came from.

And, you know, I, I live on a farm and , I have four girls and a husband, God bless my husband. and, you know, I've always sort of been very drawn to things that are offline and, and been very much like that has always been a big part of what I do. And so to have this online business that requires me to be on my phone or be at my desk, You know, it burned me out and in different parts of my life really burned me out.

So I think that's really where all of this was born. you know, there's definitely specific parts of it that we'll dig into, I'm sure, but that's really kind of where it came from.

**Laylee:** Oh my gosh. Well, I think that's so relatable to so many of us who, you know, Struggle with the balance of online and offline. And I think, and especially in different, you know, timeframes and different seasons, some people call it of our lives and our businesses. And like, I remember in the beginning, you could not pry my phone out of my hands.

Like I was so excited and now the older I get and the more my family changes and my priorities change and shift. I've definitely leaned more toward like what you would probably call that soft business model, and I also I've recalibrated like my goals. So let's dive into What is the idea or the concept of soft business entail? and how do you teach on that? Like what all goes into it?

**Molly:** Well, really like, it's actually kind of neat the way it all sort of came to be, because I had someone I was coaching at the time and she said, one of the things I love about you is that the way you coach is just really soft. And I was like, wow, that's like, that's a neat word.

And at the time I had been sort of having my own like work on the side where I was feeling like, Okay. There are all these women who deserve to have successful businesses. Like there is no one who does not deserve to have what they want and what they're, you know, what they're dreaming of. And I was like, so why are businesses failing?

Cause it's not a question of the person. so I began to like really kind of map out like a big messy mind map on a piece of paper. And I had sort of come up with

these like four areas that I felt like were the keys to a business and to a business's success. And they spelled the letters soft, not even kidding.

Like before I had already done the work. And then I think I had like one that I had to tweak the tiniest bit. So. The letters do stand for something. And the first one is story. And I really think this is the key. Like this is probably the one that I find that's most important.

The one that I find that people skip over. because I think there is something that's so important about understanding the stories that have shaped us and helped us become the person that we are. And those stories. In turn shape, the kind of work that we want to do in the world and the people that we want to help.

And so when we know those things, and we are like, aware of those things, sometimes those stories are things that we're carrying with us that aren't serving us. Sometimes their stories are someone who has come into our lives as a hero and has shaped us and, you know, changed us. for me, a lot of the stories were hard stories and they were things that I was believing about myself that were holding me back in my business.

And when I really uncovered those stories and realized that they weren't true and that they were really keeping me, in the shadows, playing small, holding me back. And I sort of chipped away at them. Then I had this like No wonder I do what I do because I don't want anyone to feel the way, like I'm spending all this energy making sure no one feels this way about themselves.

And so it's not like, Oh, and now I don't have any, you know, I don't ever think about those things or those, you know, stories I care, like, it's not like I'm like magically fixed, but just the awareness of them and then realizing that this is why I love what I do. And this is why I, you know, want to like, Look at people and be like you deserve to have the business of your dreams and you deserve to be out front and you deserve all the things that you want like you do not need to stay small and safe and stay in the shadows but that story also Helps us figure out what about us is unique.

And I think a lot of times that is the missing link for so many businesses and so many people is that we're not super clear on what that is because we haven't done this work. And I think we start our business or, you know, we have an idea and the first thing we want to do is like, we want to get a logo.

We want brand colors and we want to figure out what we're going to sell. And we want to, you know, put up our Instagram posts, but we need to do this work that's hard. That takes time. that's not as fun and exciting and flashy, but it is key. And that is the thing that helps us stand out.

And so that's why this is so important. I'm so passionate about this. This is what I teach. This is where I start with everything, because when you figure all of this out and you see how it all fits together. It helps you figure out what your secret sauce is and it helps you show up better in your work and it helps you show up better with your people and it is soft because when we know these things we have like a grounding in our business and we have like A peace and contentment.

And like, we just feel rock solid and then we know how to show up. We can sense when things are in alignment. We can sense when there's friction. It gives us the ability to move and flex in our business with those things because we know what's important to us and what we value and how we're different.

So story is huge. Obviously, as you can see, so, the O of soft is observation. And I always say it's like lowercase O and capital O there's the capital O in the sense of, Like, what difference do you want to make? What do you wish was different? What do you wish people believed differently about themselves?

Like, what do you want as you sort of look out at the big, broad picture? And then the little O to me is like. Paying attention to the little details in our everyday lives because those are the things that keep us present and keep us grounded. and keep us like real and, and in touch with the things that are around us.

It's so easy to get caught up in social media and all the information constantly pouring in and just being plugged in all the time. And so that little, Oh, of just noticing and paying attention and observing those little moments, I really believe that that's so key. F is for freedom because I really do.

Think that this work we do gives us freedom to do so many things, to build so many things in our business, to have the flexibility to be with our kids in the middle of the day, or, maybe it's caring for an older parent or, you know, just all the things that our lives ask of us.

and then the T is tenacity because. I always want to make it clear that soft is not weak. It is not like being, wimpy. Like soft is tough. Like it is tenacity. It is

showing up. It is working hard. It is working hard with purpose. Like I say, I'm anti hustle, but. We all have seasons of hustle.

Like you're at a season of hustle right now, but it's hustle with purpose. And it's for a season because I was in a season that I said was like my hustle season and seven years later, and my kids. I was still in that season, you know? So we do work hard. Soft I say soft is the new strong. Like it is strong. It is tough. It is tenacious, but it has purpose behind it. So that really are sort of the keys to soft business. And the knowledge of them that I don't want to say mastery because I don't think we ever master like we're always learning. But like those things allow us to be strategic in our business, to be like I said, like rock solid in our business so that we can show up with like purpose and passion and intention.

And then we can unplug and we know that we've done what we needed to do. And we can be like fully present. In our lives, the people we love, the things we love to do all of that.

**Laylee:** my gosh, so much to unpack here. I, first of all, I love it. I love the acronym. I love that it coincidentally spelled soft. Like talk about fate. That was

amazing. I love everything you said about of the, I of your soft business model. But I love what you were saying about story and, I mean, all of it, but the story part really stood out to me because I think so many people struggle with that.

And you mentioning having to put in that work beforehand. I mean, I think so many people, like you said, they start out and they don't necessarily do that work up front. Do you think it's ever too late to do that? Like, what if somebody is a few years in and they realize, like, I haven't done that yet.

what can they do?

**Molly:** I was a few years in, like I was many years in, and then I did the work and then I was like, Whoa, Then my business took off and my confidence took off and my, like letting go of things that weren't serving me and serving my business that I knew didn't feel right. so I think it absolutely can happen at any point of your business.

And I will say too, I feel like I'm, Constantly revisiting it. And I feel like I'm constantly learning more about myself and I'm learning more about the people that I work with as I work with them more and more. And I think that it's like always being refined and it's always changing a little bit, even as my own life changes and the seasons that I'm in.

So absolutely never, ever, ever too late. And I think what happens a lot of times the people that come to soft business school, like. They're feeling like something just isn't clicking. And they're just anxious to figure out what that is. So whether they feel like they're doing all the right things and they're not finding the right people or their business isn't at the like financial place that they want it to be, or just something doesn't feel right.

That's a lot of times, you know, what I see, or they feel like, you know, I've been successful, but I'm just feeling like tired and I'm feeling burned out. And I feel like something's got to give. And so they're drawn to soft, they're drawn to soft business school. And they're like, they feel like, you know, all this time, I'm not sure if I know what makes me stand out, or I'm not sure like

what my story is or what stories I want to tell, you know, what part of it is public and what part of it's part of what I do, you know, some people work on their story and it's personal and it's theirs and it's shaped who they are, but it's not a story that they're going to like get on. Instagram and be like, so when I was 10, you know, it's personal.

So it's not like, something that's always public, but it is seeing how those things shape us. And it just gives you this richness and depth to your work. That really is what I think is so impactful.

**Laylee:** love the point of it may not be something that you share, but that doesn't mean that it's not part of the why behind what you're doing or what it is that you're doing. Like, I know personally for me, it took me a while to differentiate those two things of, I still can reflect on it. For my own purposes, but I think we're so driven.

I mean, I don't know. Do you see that a lot? I mean, as an Instagram strategist, you probably do see a lot that everybody is just focused on the content they can create. And so if it's not content that they can create and put out there, sometimes we just breeze past it, right? Like, what are your tips for really uncovering what does make you unique, even if it's not content you're going to utilize?

**Molly:** Yeah. I really think there's sort of two places to start. And I think the one is on the more personal side. And honestly, , I think some of the best things you can do for yourself is to carve out time that is quiet and your own time. It's not going to be interrupted when you're like in the mood, set the mood or whatever you need to do, like don't force it.

and just allow yourself to sit down and write. And I do it on my computer because I need my brain goes faster than my hands. and so allowing yourself to just put on paper, whatever comes to mind. And so for me, it's very similar to finding your why it's a very similar exercise, but then it's like kind of takes some more steps, I really started with like, My childhood, my adolescence and adulthood.

Like I looked at those three parts of my life and I thought, okay, what is one event in each of those pieces of my life that really stands out to me? And when I wrote about each of those events and I kind of looked for the thread that connected them, there was a very clear thread through all three of them and in full like honesty and realness, it was about my weight and it was about, you know, And this story I was carrying with me that because I wasn't the weight that I thought I should be, I did not deserve to be out front.

I did not deserve to be the one like on the stage. So I worked so hard behind the scenes to make everybody else look good because I felt like I didn't deserve it. And even like in the clothes that I wear, like I would, wear black because I just wanted to blend in, be safe, stay like nobody.

Look at me, you know, I had been carrying that with me. And so my business was moving at a snail's pace because I didn't really think, even though I felt like, I feel this call to like do something big and like, I feel like I have important things to do. I was like, just kind of staying back in the shadows.

Staying small, staying safe, because I had that belief. And when I kind of recognized it for the lie that it is, and then I worked on like, what else might be true? It really changed everything for me, honestly. And I realized why it was so important for me when I work with women. It's not wait for everybody.

It's something else. It might be, you know, your education, it might be something else that you're holding onto. And I realized like, I don't want anyone else to be wasting their time holding onto these things about themselves that aren't true. So that is like why I'm so passionate about this and why I like, I don't like take these women's face in my hand and just be like, you know, this is what's true about you.

So really, like, starting there, and then I think sort of happens in this whole sort of process of uncovering it is then you kind of look at it. Like, oh, there's sort of this, like, no wonder I love to do this kind of a feeling and you sort of find that thread and sometimes it takes somebody on the outside looking at it all for you

because it's hard sometimes to look at your own stories and see that, but then I really tell people, like, okay, let's take all of that.

And all we've learned, and again, this is happening over a long period of time, but I'm like, let's take all of this. And now let's look at okay, what is the outward public facing version of this? What is the version of your story that you tell? And then let's look at like, what about you makes you different?

So I really tell people to look at like, I say red flags, like what are some of the red flags in your industry that you look at? And you were like, man. When people, you know, say that I'm like, you know what? There is a better way. There is a different way. It doesn't have to be that way. Or when people talk about that, it just, Oh, it just fires me up because I know that that's not the way it has to be.

So I tell people, look at red flags. I also tell people to look at like. And then, your personal values because a lot of who you are shapes the kind of business you're building. So maybe it's like, you know, I want people who experience my business to feel like that this is like a kind, warm, welcoming place.

So I think looking at that, and then the last thing I tell people to look at is kind of like their methods or their process. And like, what is the secret sauce about how you do things and how you work with people or how you serve people? And so that is sort of how you can kind of begin to sort of mine.

Your story for the things and the parts of it that really make you stand out and make you different because there are tons of people, there are a bajillion business coaches out there, but if you feel aligned with building a business that's soft and building a soft business, then I'm your girl. So like, I tell people like.

Mostly I'm not like, I, When people ask me my niche, I'm like women, because I feel like my point of view is my niche. I am the niche. I am the brand because I know my messaging so clearly. And I know what I believe about building a business so clearly that if you feel aligned with that, you're my person.

And so it really like gives a freedom to, to just showing up as yourself and you and what you believe. And then the people will come.

**Laylee:** wow. Yeah. I mean, first of all, so powerful. Thank you for sharing like some of your story and some of your uncovering process, because I think it really does help to have an example of what you had taken yourself through.



And I know for me, I can relate so much that resonates so deeply with me. Before you said, wait, you said childhood, like adolescence, adult.

I was like, wait, wait. I mean, a hundred percent same, grew up a dancer in a time that was not nice to us,

**Molly:** Mm

**Laylee:** to the, thicker girls. Anyway, so all that to say, it was very eyeopening. and like you said, it's not going to be wait for everybody, but it's going to be something for everyone that, They probably have pop into their minds when they hear you use your example.

So thank you for sharing that. and I, also just think there's so much that I hope people were taking, I was like taking notes myself with my notebook, taking notes of myself. just because I do think that it's, it is so important to be able to go through this. Now. I love what you said about finding your story, finding the things that make you unique, finding the things that make.

You find the people who are aligned with you. I loved the concept of observation as well. Like, how does that tie in with the soft business model? And I liked your lower case and capital O too. That was fun.

**Molly:** to me, I think it is almost like the online offline of it a little bit too. And it's funny, I taught soft business school, the last group that went through soft business school, we were talking about, you know, what change do you want to see in the world? And what work do you want to do?

And all this kind of stuff. And I get really passionate about it and I'm like, wow, you know, just talking and teaching them and she raises her hand like on the zoom and she says, what if I don't want to change the world? And I was like, I don't think she understands. Hopefully she'll like listen to one of these podcasts because I was like, I don't think you understand the impact that your question had on me because it was just so powerful.

Like we don't have to change the world. Like we don't all have to go out and like be on big stages and be on all the big podcasts and whatever. Like some of us, we don't want that. But you are changing the lives of the people around you and the people that you're coming in contact with. So your world could be lots of different sizes.

So when I say like that big, Oh, of like, man, like for me, it's like looking in the face of like individual people that I care about. I care about their business. I care about their heart and wanting this for them. Like, of course I want as many people to know this and experience this as possible, but like not everyone. feels that way, or they feel like what they want smaller or it's more behind the scenes. Like I have someone who she's like, you know, I have always felt like can't do things, or I always felt like I wasn't smart enough, whatever. But turns out she's like a tech whiz. Like she can just come in and like, figure it out, help you feel less overwhelmed.

But she's not going to get in there and be like, well, the reason that you can't get your, funnel set up is because you have these beliefs about yourself. You know, that's not what she's going to do, but she knows why it matters to her, it makes her more passionate about her work. So I think that's a good point to make.

Cause I do get very passionate about it. But at the same time, our world can look very different for everybody, different sizes, different amounts of people, you know, different platforms. So to me, that's really part of it. And the little, Oh, I think really is just like the unplugged. Oh, like it is like that remembering, I think whenever I feel burned out, whenever I feel like I just have nothing left to give, I notice that I've stopped noticing.

I've stopped observing. I've stopped. Being connected to the world around me, the people around me, the little details. So I think that is sort of that like grounding of what that is and what that does. And it is that, you know, they talk about like gratitude, how that just changes in a moment of gratitude, it changes your perspective.

To me, it's very similar to that. Like just that, like paying attention really does. Change our perspective and sort of bring us back to what really matters.

**Laylee:** Oh my gosh. I feel like one thing that. That I think of when you say, when you talk about gratitude and you talk about coming back and, overcoming burnout is for so many people and by so many people, I mean me, I have a hard time when I, know I can sense myself burning out and I've spoken on burnout, I've taught on it, I've taught on scheduling, I struggle to be consistent in the practice of gratitude because I have, I mean, I think they're behind me.

I have like multiple of those. You know, the five minute journals that are like, what are you grateful for? And I just write the same things over and over again. Cause I'm like, okay, my family, my husband, my people, my job, my

community. But it's like, I struggle so much to find that, that I think when you talk about observing in a small way, it makes me think how small are we talking here?

**Molly:** Yeah, no, that's a great question. If you went on a road trip with me, I am the kind of person who I probably drive my children crazy, but I'm like, girls, look at how beautiful the sky looks at that class. You're like, I just tried to be present enough to be paying attention. It can also be like.

Oh my gosh. Like I just sliced these lemons for my drink and the sun is coming in on the counter and they look beautiful. And then I'll like take a video

for my reels and then I'll pay attention. No, you know? So it can be like, it can be that too. Like I think it kind of needs to be what works for you in a way, because I am the girl who wants to be the five minute journal girl, but in reality, I'm Usually just the like, pay attention to the sunset, look at the sky, look at the light when it comes in on the counter, you know, pick the flowers and stick them, you know, just things like that.

Here are the kids in the other room laughing, like, , those are the things that I have to pay attention to. And so as much as I wish I was the one who found five minutes of quiet in the morning, it doesn't always look like that for me, but it is still a practice. That I have to do and it becomes habit, honestly, like I'm probably a little annoying, but like, I love it.

I pay attention. You know, I pay attention to those details.

**Laylee:** my gosh. I think it's so great , to give people some, and my people, again, I mean me, I'm definitely going to be putting this into practice. and I think this just speaks to your, model in general of we hear these rules over and over again, and these prompts over and over again, this is what you should be doing to make yourself successful.

And none of it lands with me. And so I

just kind of like, Push that aside, but this is something that I think anybody can do if they choose to make it a practice, right? So

**Molly:** Mm

**Laylee:** that.

**Molly:** Yeah, definitely.

And I think too, as I've gotten like older and maybe a little more like confident in my business and what I do too, like I am the kind of person who could spend or who has, I should say, I should speak truthfully. I've done this. I do this. Like I will spend all the time. Like I'll see somebody's like way they plan their calendar or I'll see some way they set up, like they have notion.

Okay. Maybe this is the thing. And it can be that it can be planning. It can be like, Oh, this person who is also a business coach. Okay. She has a membership. She does one on one. So that must be the way. and to me, this is soft too. it is that like feeling the friction and going the other way.

And that like flexibility. And so I think like listening to what. Works for you and just doing that thing, because every time I buy a planner, or I adopt a new system, or I think she has a membership. So I should have a membership or whatever. It might be. Well, I do have 1, but, you know, like, we see what other people do.

like, I always come back to like the system I've used for years and years and years and it's like, stop trying to push yourself to be something that you're not like, I am not the five minute journal girl. I am the just notice in the moment. I am the list maker and the Trello board girl, you know, like, so I think that is another thing, like paying attention to like, what is right for you, what fills your cup.

What feels good to you and to follow those things. And sometimes that's really scary. Like I have let go of things this last year. That were really scary to let go of. It was like a major chop to my income, , but they were burning me out. , they were not serving me in order to have space for other things.

I had to let them go and it's been scary, but it was the right thing to do. You know? So I think it's some of that listening to that as well.

**Laylee:** Yeah. I mean, that can definitely be scary. Speaking from experience. I did the same and I love, what you said. Find what works for you and do that. I mean, for me personally, I immediately thought of Everybody's saying successful people wake up at 5 a. m. I woke up at five, 5 30 a. m. For the entire time I was a high school teacher and as a student.

So the majority of my life, my body never adapted. My body hates waking up that early. I get physically sick. So I'm just not going to do that. And you know

what I'm doing just fine. I think you and I have been in business around the same amount of time where at the beginning it was like, Everyone was talking about becoming a six figure business.

Now, all of a sudden it's a seven figure business and it's just, you can never keep up and recalibrating. No, I need to know how much money is enough for my family and for me to do the things I love to do and not have to do things I don't want to do in order to make that happen. So I just think we just are fed all these, all these things and I love what you're doing.

I think it's, it's so beneficial to our entire industry. So I would love to know, I just Is there anything else that you want to touch on when it comes to like running a soft business before we, you know, spoiler alert, get into the unpopular opinion, which I kind of feel like everything we've talked about has

been that there's a million unpopular opinions, but maybe we don't have to do that question.

This is one episode because the whole thing is like, don't listen to anyone.

**Molly:** exactly.

**Laylee:** on that note, is there anything else that comes to mind when it comes to soft business that you think our people need to hear?

**Molly:** I would say just the fact that this isn't necessarily the glamorous work or. The work that is like outward facing, but the impact that it has is going to reach into every single part of your business and your life. Like, that's how passionate I am about this, especially the story part of it, because it will make you.

So much more confident in what you're doing. It will make things easier, which is like a claim I don't make lightly, but honestly, like it really, really does. It trickles into your content. It trickles into the products that you have. It trickles into how you talk to people, what your like brand is.

So to me, I think like just being willing to set aside time to do this kind of work and It's so important and it's so hard to make yourself do it, but I honestly believe it changes everything you know, our lives and our business are so intertwined and it will just have an impact across all of those things.

**Laylee:** I love that. I know that for myself, I definitely want to continue to follow along with, everything that you teach, where, What's the best way for people to continue to learn from you? Because I will be doing that.

**Molly:** Well, Instagram is my place. It's my favorite place to be. So I'm just at molly. bullet on Instagram. I have something called soft business school and this is what it's about. It's about this work. So it's really starts with the heart work and then it goes into the strategy part of it. and again, it's like, If you have all the strategy in the world, eventually it's either going to not work for you or it's going to fall flat.

And so doing this work also is what really makes the strategy work and makes the magic happen. So those are really like the two best places, but Instagram is my favorite place to be. So find me there.

**Laylee:** Amazing. Well, we're going to link all your things in the show notes. You guys know where to find it at. So here's the thing [podcast.com](http://podcast.com) and I can't thank you enough, Molly. This was amazing.

**Molly:** Thank you. It was so fun.