

MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh, August 2026

Nina Tulio: People-First Businesses



Nina Tulio is a globally recognized salon business coach, motivational speaker, author, and Business Education Ambassador for Oligo Professionnel. Her mission is clear: to empower salon owners and stylists to grow with confidence, lead with authenticity, and build profitable, people-first businesses.

Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh** soon after the North American Hairstyling Awards named Nina their 2026 Educator of the Year, she discussed the steps for building a “people-first culture,” common leadership mistakes that can hurt profitability, and having a mindset of abundance rather than a mindset of scarcity.

Winn: Hi everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to a wonderful issue of MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh. Again, I'm saying this, I think, that—in every interview that I've been doing recently—that this is my 30th year. I'm so proud of that. And this is going to be a wonderful issue because of this beautiful woman that I'm sitting with and I had the honor of being in Orlando with her several weeks ago. We were together, but there was 50,000 other people that were there with us. It was called the Premiere Show and it's one of the largest conventions within the professional beauty industry. Not that the majority of our people listening to this are in the professional beauty industry because, Nina, they're not, but they're in all kinds of industries. And I know that the experience that you bring is absolutely going to benefit them as well. So anyway, a couple of weeks ago, so we are in Orlando and they have an awards show. It's kind of like the Academy award, the Grammy awards for the professional beauty industry. And this is a big deal. This is a really big deal in our industry. And get this, everybody: Nina was named 2026 North American Hairdressing Awards Educator of the Year. Educator of the Year! Nina, congratulations. How did that feel that night?

Nina: Thank you. I am—I'm still in shock, I think. I was absolutely stunned that I won. I mean, you were there, so you saw my reaction, you saw my speech. I had nothing prepared. I was in a category with educators of such high regard: icons, if you will. And I just thought to my—there was just no way. And so. I was there to cheer and root for everybody else. I'm always so inspired by the work that I see going to the NAHA awards, because even though I was a hairstylist for 20 years, my brain couldn't do all of those. I just can't compute. And so, I'm inspired. And so, yeah, it's an honor. It is a true honor. And I'm still processing, believe it or not. I really am.

Winn: Well, congratulations. And that's going to follow you around for the rest of your career, as it should, because that was a huge, huge award and acknowledgment. So, just so proud to see you receive that.

Nina: Thank you.

Winn: And I know that did not come easy. That comes because what you do is you hustle. And by the way, I love that word *hustle*. You hustle. So, congratulations.

Nina: Thank you. Yes. Grinding all day. Twenty-nine years, still grinding.

Winn: Grinding. I'll use that word, too. I like that. So, a little bit more about who Nina is. She has 29 years of experience in the professional beauty industry. She's a globally recognized salon business coach, motivational speaker, and proud business education ambassador for Oligo Professionnel. As a former hairstylist of 20 years, commissioned salon owner for 11 years, and former chain salon executive, Nina brings not only extensive experience but also deep empathy and a true passion for uplifting the professional beauty industry. And, you know, obviously I'm reading this and so—it was written, Nina, you wrote this, that you have a deep empathy for the professional beauty industry. And maybe I want to stop and comment on that or ask you, because it's rare that your people use the word *empathy* when it comes to how they describe their passion or describe their approach to their industry. Why are you using that word *empathy*?

Nina: It—because it's true. You know, I deeply care about people and I always have. And I am so blessed that I get to be in an industry with such beautiful people. And you know, I've been through a lot, you know. A lot of us have. And I really just connect to people in our industry and I not only can just relate to them, but I can truly feel, you know, when someone's going through something, they're struggling, they're feeling pain, they don't feel like they're good enough, they're questioning themselves, there's imposter syndrome. I feel that on such a deep, deep level, and I really feel connected to them. And I just show up as I am. I think there is a relatability there. When you meet me, when you see me on Instagram, wherever you see, you're always gonna get the same version of me. And I think there is a true connection with people. I always kind of—I felt like I was the underdog, always the underdog. I still kind of feel like I am the underdog, believe it or not. I still feel like I'm fighting out here for people to hear me and believe in my message. And I want to support the underdog. I want to see them win, you know, and I will be cheering for them. So that is true. You know, I just feel people in just a deep, deep way.

Winn: Hmm. I think the reason why I've latched onto that word *empathy* is because I read this report that said major employers are concerned with this next generation of people entering the workforce. They're concerned because empathy is down. There's a decline in empathy and, Nina, rather than me, give our listeners a good definition of empathy.

Nina: It's not saying, "Oh, I can relate." It's putting yourself in their shoes. It's saying, "Wow, I've been there. I understand. I feel you. I get it. I know what it feels like." You know, there's a difference there of just saying, "Wow, I can understand that that may hurt or that may have upset you." No: "I've been there, too. And I can really relate to how that makes you feel, because I've felt that." There's a difference there. And I think with the survey that you read, there's a lot of statistics out there that show, and even from Harvard Business, that the highest levels of leaders are leading with empathy. They're leading with compassion and kindness. And that is what I feel that we need to have in our salons and in our beauty industry world, but also in the world of leaders in general, is it's not just about getting the job done, focusing on the numbers, looking at the stats, making sure that we're growing. Yes, those things are important, but without leading your people and understanding your people and hearing them and really understanding where they're coming from and what they're going through, it's harder to get the results that you're looking for. So, it is just about feeling them and putting yourself in your shoes and really relating to them on such a deeper, deeper level.

Winn: Hmm. Well, the reason why major companies would be concerned about a decline in empathy is because you can't really offer impeccable customer service without empathy. And sadly, many of us have experienced that. You have a bad experience at a restaurant or at a store and you try to share with the manager, you try to share with the team that you're not happy, that things did not go as planned. And sometimes the response that you get back is, "Oh, well, who cares? So what?" Because there is that lack of empathy. And my gosh, we could have a whole conversation about why we feel like there's a decline in empathy. You know, I was always taught that empathy is not something that you're born with. You learn. You learn empathy. So, I think that this is going to be a wonderful conversation as well. I haven't even finished telling everybody everything that there is to know about you. So, I got to finish with that, okay?

Nina: *[Laughs]*

Winn: Back to my reading here. I have a job to do. Let me do my job. Okay, So, Nina's mission is clear: to empower salon owners and stylists to grow with confidence, lead with authenticity, and build profitable people-first businesses. And so, I know that there was a lot of questions just in that one statement. And we're going to get to those. Through real-world strategy and heartfelt guidance, Nina continues to inspire beauty professionals across the globe. And let me also say that, again, the majority of my wonderful, loyal listeners to my podcast series are not from the professional beauty industry, but that's my foundation is that industry. I can't speak about other industries. All I can do is share my experience and my wisdom that I have gained from 40-plus years in this industry. And Nina, that's your story as well. But we will stay mindful of all of our listeners who are not from our industry but I know that you're going to gain a lot from Nina's incredible experience and wisdom here. So, once again, Nina, thanks for saying yes to this.

Nina: Yes, thank you.

Winn: By the way, you said yes, like right after you won this award. I'm like, *Great. She won this award. I won't be able to reach her for another couple of years.*

Nina: I will always say yes to you, my friend. Don't worry.

Winn: Okay, thank you. So, Nina, you say that your lane, your message, is focused on pricing services, increasing profit and servant leadership, creating a people-first culture. And we're going to get into all of that, as I said, but let's hear about your personal story. Because again, 29 years in this industry—and maybe even your story prior to getting into this industry. I love, I love, love, storytelling. And sometimes it takes a minute for me to drag stories out of people.

Nina: [Laughs]

Winn: I actually had one woman who said that she had a life coach who told her that she should never tell personal stories. And I was like, “You need to fire that life coach. That was the worst advice you ever received.” Cause I think that we, you know, back with the conversation on empathy: it's that fact that we have been through stuff ourselves that we can relate to other people.

Nina: Sure.

Winn: And—oh, who's that singer? Oh, what's his name? People are going to laugh at me because I can't come up with his name. The redheaded guy from the UK, slept in subways and everything. What's his name? Love him. Oh my gosh. Anyway, there's a lot. For some reason, he's doing a lot of interviews because he really, really struggled to get to where he's at today. So, he's enjoying this success that he absolutely deserves. But he made a statement, and I totally relate to this. He made a statement that he said he has learned nothing from success. He's learned everything from struggle and failure. And I love that.

Nina: Amen. Amen.

Winn: So that's why I think that our stories are important. So, let's go to your story.

Nina: Well, where should I start? I think that statement is so true. And I feel like some of the best leaders are made through struggle. They're so resilient and so kind because of their struggle. And I'm one of those people, you know? I come from a family that was, you know, mom, dad, Italian family, traditional. My mom didn't work until I was probably maybe six or seven. I have older brothers and a sister. And it was an interesting dynamic, you know. I think we learn a lot from our family members and what we see when we're growing up. We take a lot of that with us. And I really—my mom and dad did the best they could. You know, they're really good people for sure. But, you know, there were things that—trauma and things that I have endured that I feel like I've carried with me. And when I decided that I want to go to beauty school, I signed up for my vo-tech. I was the first one to sign up for vo-tech, so I'm a techie. And I was so excited because I am not a student, per se. I wasn't

great. I could barely calculate, barely graduated high school because I couldn't get through applied math. I wasn't a studious person. I had a hard time retaining information. And I loved beauty school. And I love making people feel good. And so, I signed up, finished beauty school, went to Allentown School of Cosmetology. I'm originally from Pennsylvania, now live in Santa Monica, but finished school, started a job, you know, in a couple of towns over. And I then started working for Circuit City. You remember Circuit City?

Winn: I do.

Nina: Yep. I worked for them and I worked as customer service. And then I was a customer service manager. Had impeccable training from them on customer service. And then I decided that I wanted to go into hair full time, so I started working for a woman, Robin Turner, who is still my mentor to this day. And she was married to Ray Holland, who—you may know of Ray Holland, who owned the entire Holiday Hair chain on the East coast. So, that is how I met Robin Turner and Ray Holland, because she started 20-Minute Haircut and that's where I started working: at her chain. And so, Ray and Robin were my mentors and Robin is still my mentor to this day. Ray has since passed. But I started working at this chain. I started as a hairstylist, then I became a manager, then I became their district manager. And then they decided that they wanted to move to Florida, West Palm Beach, wanted to start a chain in West Palm Beach so they invited me to come along with them to be a partner in their business. And so, I left my life and I moved to West Palm Beach, Florida. We opened up five salons in one year. Five. That was my college education. I spent eight years working with them. The kindest people, the most generous people; taught me everything I need to know about this business. I worked so closely with Robin, day in and day out. I ran her chain of eight salons. I had 55 employees and I was probably 24, 25 at this point. And when we moved to Florida, opened up the salons, I just felt like after all of this time, I needed to do my own thing. I needed to fly solo. It was time for me to kind of just step outside of them and really do my own thing. So, I went back home to the cold, opened up my own salon. It was called Anthony Ashley. And I owned that salon for 11 years. And my first five years were an absolute sh** show. I almost closed twice. I was in debt \$90,000 by year five during the recession. I struggled. I sold my home to keep my business alive. And after going through all of that, that was probably one of the biggest failures, I would say, but one of the most powerful lessons and absolutely allows me to stand here today and share. And so, after making all those poor financial decisions and getting myself into debt, I was able to turn my business around and, you know, we grew 20 to 30 percent year over year. And I sold the business after 11 years, you know. Love my team, still close with my team. I still call them my team. Proud of what I've done in that business with them but it was time for me to move on and do this, which is helping salon owners, helping hairstylists, solo artists, grow their business, understand pricing, profit, understanding that they can actually make a living in this business and helping salon owners really dive deeper into their culture

and their leadership so they can create success. So that, in a nutshell, is my story.

Winn: That's a great story. And again, that failure, that falling down is what now gives you the credibility and the empathy and the passion—

Nina: Yeah.

Winn: —to talk about profitability. So, yeah, again, we're to be talking about servant leadership. We're going to be talking about culture and what that's all about. The people-first culture. But you just came out with a book titled *Profit Is Personal*. So, you say that profit isn't just a financial metric, but please explain what you mean by that.

Nina: *Profit Is Personal*, really, this was a labor of love for me. It took me over a year to write this book. And it was so hard for me to come up with a concept and a title and all of the things. And then, all of a sudden, it just kind of started to click. And I want people to truly understand that profit isn't just about your finances. It isn't just about understanding your numbers and understanding your target profit and understanding how to price services. Profitability is weaved through every single piece of your business: through your client experience, through your leadership, through your culture, through your systems, but most importantly, through you. The first chapter of the book is titled “You,” because you have to be okay with yourself and understand yourself and learn to drop the ego and lead with empathy and kindness and really include other people, but you have to understand that your insecurities are going to shine a little bit through that. And so, I think I want people to understand that profit isn't just numbers. We have to get all of the things right. Not perfect, because there isn't such a thing, but we have to get them right. And we have to know that one holds the hand of the other with leadership and with systems and with, you know, with you being good within yourself in order to create a successful, profitable, sustainable business.

Winn: I know that this isn't just true in our industry. It's probably true in many, many other industries—

Nina: For sure.

Winn: —that people have a hangup about making money. Like, for some reason they think that, “Yeah, I want to make money.” And by the way, I always say that people who say that they don't care to make a lot of money would lie about other things as well. There's nothing wrong. Sometimes people will associate poverty with spirituality, which I don't get that. There's nothing spiritual about not being able to pay your bills. And my gosh, money gives you power, which means you can make a difference in the lives of other people. And so, do you find that that's common in our industry? And again, probably in other industries as well, that people have a hangup. They are holding themselves back thinking that it's a bad thing to want to be profitable, to want to make a lot of money, which probably then is this domino effect of why they don't raise their prices when they should raise their prices. Their rent went up,

their supplies went up, everything went up, but they didn't raise their prices. I mean, I'm sure there's a whole big domino effect here. So that was a mouthful. I'll shut up so you can say something profound.

Nina: *[Laughs]* Well, you're—I mean, you're right. I mean, in any service-based business, I think it's, yeah, it is a problem because, especially with service-based businesses like ours where we're touching people and we become connected to them, the emotional tie becomes more important than making money. And I want people to understand—I just actually dropped a reel about this yesterday. Like it is okay to make money. It's okay to make more money than you made the year before. It's okay to be a business owner and actually make a profit. It's not—you're not wearing a badge of honor if you wake up and have a business and say, “Well, I made 1 percent profit today,” when you should be making 20. That's not what we're trying to accomplish here. And, by the way, I never met a business owner that said, “I can't wait to go into business and not make a dime.” That's not what we're doing. You can make money and still serve people. And I think finding the balance of the two is really important. And for a long time, you and I have been in this business for a long time. We've had these conversations where it is about serving the client and taking care of them and giving them discounts and not raising our prices because that's the way that they respect you and that's the way that they appreciate you. That's what gets you into financial duress. That's what gets you operating from a space of fear and financial stress. Those are the decisions that we—and I made them, too. I'm guilty. Guilty as charged. I ran my business from fear for the first five years. And I think those are the decisions that we're trying to break those patterns and behaviors because once you start to understand—and for me, it took me going broke to understand that, wait a minute, this isn't working. I'm working six days a week. I'm not making a dime. I have zero profit. I'm exhausted. You know, I'm giving my services away. I'm giving my time and my talent away. And it took me really going broke to understand like, wait a minute. If I don't have this business open and I'm not making a profit, I can't continue to serve my team. And they took a risk on me. They took a risk coming to work with me. They trust me. They believe in me. They say, “Okay, I believe and know that you're going to have my back and the door is going to be open tomorrow and I'm not going to walk in and it's going to be shut down and I'm going to have no job.” So, that is a big responsibility that we take, so we have to start making decisions on the bigger picture and not making decisions based on emotion. And you're still going to have those connect—when I raised my prices and I started running my business differently, I still had a connection with my clients. They still respected me. Did I lose a few? Yeah, a few. But most of them were like, “It's about damn time you've raised your prices. How are you surviving?” And so, yes. And other industries are in it, too. I feel like the restaurant business is kind of the same. When we serve, we get confused and we want to mix the servant side with the profit side. And sometimes we have to separate them.

Winn: Oh, Nina, so get this. I was recently interviewed by Mike Rowe and we had lunch before the podcast and he was asking me all these questions and I'm like, "Mike, I don't have the answers to some of these questions. I need to call my VP of my company to ask him some of these." He's like, "Winn just make it up." He's like, "Nobody's going to check you anyway. So just make up stuff." So, I have permission from the Mike Rowe that I can just make stuff up. So, I don't know if this is true or not, but I heard it said that when there is a bad economy, that two of the industries that are still thriving, alive and strong, are alcohol and the beauty industry. Maybe there's other industries as well, but you know, gosh, when people are struggling financially or feeling bad about themselves or about the economy, about the way things are in this country, you know, they're going to drink a lot and they want to go spend money on their looks, so that they look good and they feel better about themselves. And so, you know, I guess I'm asking you to do some kind of a callout to people who are afraid, because you said it as well. We sometimes run our businesses based on fear. What is the message you have for people about not wanting to raise their prices, even though, again, everything—rent's going up, everything else is going up, but you're not raising your prices?

Nina: Listen, you will go into complete financial duress if you are not raising your prices. There is not one business on the planet that can survive with how much costs are rising without rising with it. And so, I work with a lot of people, a lot of owners, a lot of stylists, thousands, okay? And we have these conversations often and their fear is that they're going to lose people. And now we have to take things into consideration, right? There's two different types of increases. There's one that we need to have a price increase because everything is going up and costs are going up and we have to make sure, and it's been five years since you've had your price increases and now the economy and costs have climbed, right? That's an increase. And then we also have to look at the other side, too. We have stylists and people that are booked for four, five, six, seven, eight weeks that are not raising their prices and they're scared to lose people. Listen to me: you're not meant to hold on to every single person that comes into your business and sits in your chair. It's not humanly possible. And why I'm saying this, because I want you to understand that losing people is good. You know, I feel like if you, you know, when you hold on so tightly to things and you keep it so close to your chest, you're not allowing energy to flow in and out. And it's the same thing with these damn price increases. When you're holding on so tightly and you're holding on to Betty and Judy and Carol and the people that you've had for so long, you're not allowing the Kellys of the world to come in, right? The Rhondas of the world who are now getting these beautiful, bigger balayage services, bigger ticket services, which some may not want to do those and that's okay, but you may be able to charge more for your services. So, we've got to let go of the reins a little bit. We've got to release some of those people so you can bring a new flow of energy into your business. You can bring a new flow of energy into your creativity. Because if you're doing 7N and 20 volume for the last 10 years, and that's all that you're seeing, but you want to

explore something new, we've got to let go of some of those people and educate ourselves to get in some of those newer people. So, this fallacy of like, "I have to hold on to every single person that comes." No, you're not growing financially, you're not growing creatively, and you're not growing professionally by keeping those people. So, I'm just trying to get people to think outside of the box. And again, with the badge of honor: "I've kept all of my clients for 15 years." Guess what? You're probably charging them from 15 years ago, too.

Winn: [Laughs] That's right.

Nina: You know what I mean? Because the increase is harder with the current client than it is with the new. The increase is harder there because of that connection. And I promise you, if you focus on value. If you focus on value—I know we're talking about price, but if you focus on value, because that's what the client is looking for, especially now. And this can relate to other industries, too. If you're focusing on what you offer and how you do it better than anyone else and how you do it consistently and how you share your message and you show up authentically, and you are you and you share your expertise with them and you treat them like they matter every single time, they will come back to you. Whether you charge \$50 or you charge 65. I promise you that. And I don't make promises unless I can keep it. And I'm purely speaking from experience here.

Winn: You know, this message that you're sharing about how people aren't meant to stay with you forever, that applies just as much to customers as it does to team members.

Nina: Sure.

Winn: And by the way, you don't have to be the business owner here to take value or to see value in this message. And sometimes it's the team members who know it before us business owners, you know, when we finally do terminate a team member, the rest of the team is like, "Gosh, what took you so long? We all knew they needed to go years ago. Why you've been holding on to them?" So, yeah, so this is an important conversation. You're right. Not everybody is meant to stay in our businesses as customers or as team members forever. Some are there for a year and that's great. And they add value for a year and then they move on, and that's wonderful. And some, you know, I've had some team members that have been with me literally over 40 years, but they still add incredible value to the company. So, I'm very happy for that. I remember soon after or during COVID, where I was trying to do some research to share some words of encouragement to everybody within my organization about it. And the thing that I stumbled upon was the idea of a forest fire and how healthy that is for the forest. The rejuvenation of the forest. We think that, "Oh no, everybody is supposed to stick around." No, it's good that we kind of burn this thing down. I mean, think about how many businesses closed. How many restaurants in your favorite neighborhood closed down, and yes, that was tragic and that was sad. But then what happened oftentimes was brand-new

restaurants popped up. Brand-new restaurants. That chef who's been trying to get their foot in the door and, and there was no leases available or no opportunity available. Now, all of a sudden, we've got new blood. We have new excitement. And so, maybe look at it that way. You know, you talk about the hidden cost of being busy and I want to pivot into that. And you say that many business owners mistake activity for progress. What do you mean by that?

Nina: Well, a lot of times we're busy. We're doing things. We're just moving. We're shaking. We're going from one thing to the next. We're moving, moving, But is that actually productive? Is it actually creating the result that you're looking for? I find sometimes that people who are leaders or owners or even hairstylists, there's a list. We've got to get the list and we've got to get the things done without seeing if there's actual progress coming from it. And if we're thinking about being busy in a business, just because you're busy in a business doesn't mean that you're profitable in your business. There's two different things with that, too.

Winn: Right.

Nina: Just because you're booked and busy doesn't mean that you're making a profit. And just because you're showing profit on paper doesn't mean you have money in the bank. There's three different things and components here that we can really kind of dive into and talk about. And I think you have to be very intentional with your time. You know, your time is so precious and so valuable when you are managing and leading people and running businesses. And so, don't just do things to do things, do things that are intentional, that are always going to create a result and an outcome for the greater good and for the bigger picture.

Winn: So, what are some warning signs that a business is growing in an unhealthy way?

Nina: So, if a business growing in an unhealthy way. I mean, well, let's talk about A-number one. If your business is growing and you're still not showing a profit in the business, that could be unhealthy, right? I think—now, there's also the side of it that you're reinvesting back into the business to keep the business growing. But we also have to get to a point where the business is actually throwing a profit and it's just not recycling cash. We've got cashflow, which is money coming in and out of the business, right? That's energy, too. So, it's money coming in and out of that business. But an unhealthy business doesn't know where that money is going. So, there are a lot of businesses that are busy. Believe me, I see a lot of businesses that are busy. They don't know where their money's going. They don't know what their spend is. They don't know what their payroll percentage is. They don't know what their rent percentage is. They don't. They're not saving any money and they're rarely showing a profit or they're showing a profit and then that profit doesn't match what's in the bank account. So, now, where is that money going? So, that is an unhealthy way of growth, in a business. I think that that probably is number

one. Also, I think, you know, when you're thinking about unhealthy growth, too, is that you're not growing. If you're doing the same thing over and over and over, and yes, your business may be growing but you're not growing and you're not open to change, that is also an unhealthy way of growing a business, because think about it. If we're running our businesses the way that we did five to ten years ago, it's not working today. If I lead, if I was the same leader I was five to ten years ago, it wouldn't work in my business now. So, my salon owners and beauty professionals that I work with that are thriving, they're also growing as people. They're investing in themselves in education. They're not only—I'm not just talking about doing hair education. I'm talking about taking business classes, taking classes outside of the industry. They're spending time on learning about themselves. And so, there are so many ways that businesses are growing in an unhealthy way, but if you're not growing and you're not ahead of it and you're not projecting and forward thinking, you're going to get caught in the trap, which could then lead to unhealthy profit margins, could lead to unhealthy leadership, could lead to unhealthy or toxic cultures and environments. So, really, I mean, it all starts with you. That's what this really does all come down to at the end of the day: your thoughts, your decisions, your leadership and mindset.

Winn: You know, I want to ask you to have this exact same conversation, but directed towards not the business owner, not the entrepreneur, but to the team member. That team member who is either paid a salary wage or a commission wage. Because we always say, "Gosh, if my paycheck was that dollar amount, then all my problems would be over." And now you've doubled that dollar amount but you still have the mindset of struggling or you literally are struggling financially. So same conversation. You see that business owner: they don't have a handle on their numbers, on their rent, on their overhead, on their salary, on all that. Well, again, there's team members who are listening to this who are not entrepreneurs and yet they don't have a handle on what's going on in their life financially.

Nina: Right. Well, I think the question is, "What are you chasing? What is it that you're after?" I think I had to ask myself that question several times during my journey in this industry. What am I chasing? What void am I trying to fill? What goal am I trying to reach?" And everybody wants the shiny thing. Everybody wants the award. Everybody wants the salon. Everybody wants the leadership, the entrepreneurship. But you've got to do the work to get there first. People don't see what goes on behind the scenes. And so, if you are the person working behind the chair, if you are the person who is serving other people, you have to ask yourself, "What is the actual goal and why?" Why? There has to be a why behind that goal. There has to be purpose there. And, "What massive action am I willing to take to get to that goal? What am I?" Here's the thing where we have to own accountability because we get this a lot, right? "Well, the owner should be supplying the clients. The owner should be doing X to make me busy." And I'm like, "What are you doing?" You know, when my team would come to work for me, they knew—in the interview it was like, "This is 50-50. I'm going to work my ass off to get you where you

need to be, but I need you to meet me there, too. Does that work for you or not? Because if it doesn't, this is probably not the place for you.” Right? So, they already go in knowing that they're going to have to work for it, but they know that I'm going to back them 1 million percent. So, there has to be a level of accountability on your side too to say, “Wait, maybe my boss or my owner is doing that for me, but what am I doing? When was the last time I went out and handed out—showed my QR code on my phone and had them scan it to see my Instagram profile? When was the last time I went to a networking event where I can meet 50 people that are my exact target client? When was the last time I engaged on Instagram and DMs and slid into a DM and say, ‘Hey, You're my perfect target client. I would love for you to come in my chair.’” You have to really take accountability for what's going on with you. And you've got to be clear on what you're chasing and why. That is so insanely important.

Winn: Such a wonderful conversation. Tell us why you feel confidence, value, and profitability are so connected.

Nina: Profitability, confidence, and value. It's almost like this triangle effect, right? If we think about confidence and value and what we're providing, right? If we show up more confident, if we believe in our skillset, if we believe in our talent, if we believe on how we lead, generates more profit, right? If we are working behind the chair, if we are serving other people, if we show up and take the time to position ourselves, in terms of how valuable we are and spend extra time getting to know the client. Or if we spend extra time doing the little things that matter that nobody else is doing, that is going to increase your paycheck. If you show up more confident with a client and talk to them and have conversations with them, are they going to trust you more? Absolutely, yes. Are they going to send referrals to your business? Absolutely, yes. Is that going to turn into more profit or more money in the bank? Yes. So, this all compounds. And look, I'm not saying you've got to be confident every day. There are days I wake up and I'm like, “Who the hell are you?” You know, like, “How did you get here? I don't feel good about myself today. I don't like the way I look on camera today. I don't know how I ended up on that stage.” There are days when I absolutely feel like that. There are days when I question myself still, right? But the one tip that I want to share, and I want everyone to really listen to this, is when you're having those moments and you're thinking, *Why and how, and How did I end up here, and Is this right for me? Do I deserve this? Am I worthy?* I want you to think of all the lives you've touched and I want you to dig deeper into your why. Because a lot of times when we're stressed, when we're overworked, and we're feeling a little funky about ourselves, it's because we've become disconnected from our why. When we're rooted in that—and the why can change, it's allowed to change over time. When we're rooted in that and we understand our why in serving people, we feel better. *Ah, that's why I'm doing this. This is what makes sense for me. This is why I get out of bed every day. This is what, cause I'm changing lives. I'm impacting people.* Not impressing them. *I'm impacting them.* There's a difference. If you want to showboat, you want to

impress people. If you want to be humble and kind, you are making an impact on people. There's a difference there. So, I think you have to really connect with your why and let it drive every thought, every conversation, every doubt. And remember how many lives you've actually touched. It's really important to sit in that. It's really powerful, you know?

Winn: That's a beautiful conversation. And I mean, my customers, so to speak, are a bit different. My customers are students who attend my schools. My customers are people who sit in my audience and listen to me ramble on a stage. Or my customers are people who read my book. But you're right. Sometimes I wake up, I'm like, *What's the point? Am I even worthy to do this? Am I even making a difference?* And a little habit that a mentor taught me many, many years ago. I mean, you can't see it right now, but sitting right next to me is my planner. Anybody who knows me that this stupid brown planner is in my hands, it's an extension of my body. It's with me all the time.

Nina: [Laughs]

Winn: And get this, I've had this same planner, I don't know, 20 years or more, right? Anyway, in the side pocket of this planner, I have a bunch of papers stuffed in there. And okay, this is a love note that I received from somebody. It's handwritten. It's on letterhead from Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, and it's from February the 9th of 2011. Okay, so it's, I don't even know who wrote this to me. I don't know the person. It's handwritten, and it's—so I guess I spoke at Caesars Palace and somebody who was in my audience felt that they needed to go back to the room and write me this note. And I've been carrying it around with me.

Nina: Wow.

Winn: And that's one of maybe 20 love notes that are stuffed in my planner. And I pull those out like, *Gosh, am I really, am I making a difference?* When I did a podcast recently that went everywhere and it was—and I made the statement that hairdressers rule the world, okay? I made that very bold statement, okay? And then I read—and so, because that was online, I read the comments. And the comments—and I'm not talking a dozen, I'm talking hundreds if not thousands of comments, and I read a lot of them. I'm getting emotional thinking about this—were from customers. It was customers talking about their service provider. They were talking about their hairdresser. They were talking about their nail technician, their esthetician, their massage therapist, their barber. Just talking about the value that these people have in their lives. I remember one woman said, “I’d divorce my husband before I’d divorce my hairdresser. I’d say goodbye to him before I’d say goodbye to my hairdressers.” You know, just, you know, comment after comment, like, “My hairdresser has been with me through the most difficult times of my life. My hairdresser has been with me through the most incredible celebratory experiences of my life.” It was just beautiful to read that and experience that. I think that it can be common, and again, not just in our industry, that people have this mindset, they have a belief system of scarcity. Meaning there's not

enough to go around. I don't deserve this, for whatever reason. And what we're always striving for is to change that mindset, to have a mindset of abundance. I do deserve that. Not only do I deserve this, but so do you. So does everybody else. And that's, maybe that's the secret: that it's not just me that deserves that, everybody deserves that abundance as well. So, I guess before I move on from this topic, because I want to get into leadership and culture, things like that. Before we move on from this topic of making money and profitability for the individual working at a business to the entrepreneur, to the business owner who has taken all the risks and mortgaged their homes and signed a 10-year lease and just—another shout out from you or a final message on that topic about abundance, about making money.

Nina: You deserve it. I mean, really, that's what I want to share is that you absolutely deserve to not only make money but make more. And I think the other side of this is not only do you deserve it, but you deserve it without guilt. And you deserve to do it without restriction. There is a freedom there. And honestly, it really isn't about the money. It's about what the money provides. And that is freedom and security. And as humans, that's what we want. We want security, we want stability. And so, I think sometimes you have to look at yourself in the mirror and I used to do this and I used to have these little notes next to my mirror when I first opened my business, because I just felt that I didn't feel good about myself and the way that I was leading. And I used to do these affirmations. And one of the things, and I think this would be helpful for people, too. One of the things that I had a hard time saying to myself was, "I love you." Like really looking at myself and saying, "I love you." It makes me emotional thinking about it because for weeks I couldn't do it. And I learned, just like I mentioned before, that everything starts with you. In the way that you lead and take care of people, you are your business. And I knew that if I didn't learn to love myself and all of my flaws and mistakes, that I wouldn't be the best owner and leader for my business. I wouldn't show up as my best self. And so, after a couple of weeks, it started to click. And it started to make sense. And I was like, "Yeah, I do love you. You are cool. You are smart. You are deserving." And so, the more you believe in yourself, and it could be just those small affirmations that you hang next to your bathroom mirror that is, "I am worthy. I am smart. I am valuable." Whatever that looks like for you, maybe that's just the start that you need to really start to believe in your own magic, because you are magical. You are magical in every sense of the word. And when you show up in that true magic, that's when things really, really start to happen in your life and in your business, and then you can pay it forward and all of those things. So maybe take the little Post-it Note trick and try it and see how it works for you. It really changed me. And I used to do it with my team as well.

Winn: That's beautiful.

Nina: Thank you.

Winn: Again, I started my company in my twenties and, yeah, I hustled. I worked hard. And obviously I did something, I made some decisions back then that

worked, that still serve me to this day. But when I look back, especially when I meet—I'll meet students in my schools and they'll share with me their wisdom and their philosophy. And I'm like, "How old are you?" They're like, "I'm like 25." I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I was an idiot at 25. How did you figure this out?" Right?

Nina: [Laughs] Yeah.

Winn: So yeah, I was an idiot at that age. And then I was a jerk at that age. And you know, I'm 67 now and I'm not as much of a jerk as I was 10 years ago. And I had this conversation recently, like two months ago, with a school owner that—I think I've already told this story, but I'm gonna tell it again, 'cause it was kind of important. There was an event coming up and the school owner was like, "Oh, I don't know if I can be there because my daughter, it's going to be her prom." And I was like, "You know what? Skip our event. You being home for your daughter getting ready for prom is a million times more important than you showing up to our event." And she's like, "Gosh, Winn, I wish you would have believed that 20 years ago." And I was like, "What?" "Twenty years ago, Winn, when I said I had to stay home because it was my son's soccer game, you said, Oh, there's going to be plenty more soccer games. You need to be at this event." So, I was a jerk, right? So, I'm not as much of a jerk. And maybe when I'm 80, I'll look back at 67 and say, "Gosh, when you were so, you were so this or that."

Nina: [Laughs]

Winn: But we are getting better. I know. So, I want to move into this, what you call people-first leadership, which I just, I love this, by the way. So just talk to us about people-first leadership.

Nina: People-first leadership is very similar to servant-style leadership, right? Where you're putting the wants and the needs of the people first. And when I say that, I mean, you know, I actually said this in a group or maybe in a Facebook group somewhere or something. And know, if you're not willing to get personal with people, don't lead people. Because someone said, "I don't want to get personal with them and I'm not going to do personal goals with them." And I'm, you know, I said, "If you don't do that, then don't lead people." Because the foundation of a business is people. If your people are happy, they're more engaged. If they're served, they're more engaged. If they are taken care of and appreciated and valued and included, they're more engaged. We're not trying to motivate people here. We're here to get engaged people. Highly engaged people drive profit because they know that they matter and they know that you're going to hear them and appreciate them. So, people-first is all about listening to their goals and dreams. And yes, that includes their personal goals and dreams, too. And making every coaching session, every chit chat, every huddle, everything about their personal goals and their business goals and dreams and really riding on that. And if I can give an example, I'd love to, just so they can connect with what I'm saying. Is that cool?

Winn: Oh, absolutely. Please.

Nina: So, if we're coaching someone, a lot of times, you know, as an owner of a business or as a leader or entrepreneur, we go into this meeting and we're like, "Hey, just want to let you know, these are your numbers for the week. This is how you've done for your pre-booking. This is what your productivity is. Your sales are up, but this was down. And, you know, let's talk about how we can get you busier," right? That's typically how a coaching session would sound. But when we're talking about a people-first coaching session, it's like, "Hey, let's talk about some of your business and personal goals. What are you looking to do? What's long-term goal for you?" "Well, I want to buy a house." "Perfect. When do you want to buy this house?" "In the next two years." "How much money do you need to buy this house?" "\$50,000." "Okay, perfect. How much money do you have?" "Twenty-five." "Perfect. So, you need another \$25,000 in the next two years, right? What neighborhood do you want to buy the house in? What does the house look like?" Okay. This is what we're talking about. Now, I've got the goal. I've got their number. I know what kind of house they want to buy, what neighborhood. I know they need 25K. So now, every single coaching session, will I have their numbers available? Sure. I want them to know but, "Hey, listen, Sarah. Last time we talked, I know you want to buy a house, right? Now, I know that you need 25K. We've already reverse engineered to say that you need X amount of dollars every single month in addition to what you're bringing in in service dollars to hit that number, right? You remember that? Yes? Perfect. So, this month, you've actually made an additional \$2,000. So, you've reached your goal, which means you are one step closer to that \$25,000 to getting you to buy that house. Are you excited? Because I am." Right? Now every huddle, every chit chat, every talk that we have is about, "Okay, now guess what? Next month, we're going to have the same conversation. But you know what? This month, I noticed that your sales were up but your new client count was down. So, if we run your average ticket and we see that you're at a \$100 in an average ticket and it's four clients a week, that's an additional four, eight, twelve, \$1,600 that we're leaving on the table. That leaves you short to that 25K to buying your home." That's a people-first coaching session. I didn't mention sh** about myself. I didn't say anything about my goals and dreams. It doesn't matter what my metrics are, what I'm trying to do for rebooking percentage. That does not matter because when they feel that you are truly connected to their goal and dream, they are engaged. They will show up for you. They will do backflips for you. And that has to be reciprocated. And that conversation goes on and on. And I've done this with my team. I teach other owners how to do this. And it is changing the way that people show up in their businesses.

Winn: A couple of things. First of all, the scripting. You're scripting people. And some people resist that: "No, I just want to be myself." No, you do not. Your self got you where you are today. You want to go to the next level, you need to become somebody different, so let's script you. You're an actor in a play. People who go out to perform *Phantom of the Opera* are not winging it.

They're not. They're not making up their lines as they go along. No, they learn a script and they deliver that script. They have rehearsed that script over and over again. So, and by the way, when you're in their audience, you are moved by a brilliant performance, okay? This is a performance, right? There's nothing wrong with being scripted. You know, you go to work for the Ritz-Carlton. Sorry. It's a whole new language. They will script you exactly what you say, what you do not say, how you address a customer. I mean, it's all scripted, so nothing wrong with being scripted. I also want to talk to those people who tried to check out of this conversation a couple of minutes ago when you were talking about personal lives: "No, I'm not going to get personal with people." We're not asking for you to ask them about their marriage problem.

Nina: Right.

Winn: No, that's not what we're talking about here. You're entering people's back door, so to speak, by finding out what's valuable to them, what's important to them. You know, what do they value? You want them to value company standards and company goals and the company products and services that you're selling, that you're offering. You want them to value all of that. Well, again, we've got to value what's important to them. And you also use the word *engaged*. People are not engaged. Now, maybe they're engaged. Of course, everybody is engaged with their time. You know, they show up from nine to five because they have to receive what? A paycheck. But that's all you've done: you've engaged their time and we're talking about engaging their hearts, their passions, their creativity. That's the engagement that we're hoping for.

Nina: Sure. Well, there's a difference between showing up and being engaged. You can show up from nine to five and punch in and do hair and serve people and give a massage and do all the things. But being engaged means that you have actually clocked in. You are leaning in fully with 100 percent of your mind, body, and soul, and you are checked in and you're showing up at a different level. You know? And so, I think there is a difference there for sure. I think—two, three years ago, I took a class, a Harvard Business class on culture and leadership. And I learned a lot of this through there. That's where the engagement side comes in. And it was one of the most powerful classes that I've ever taken. I had to show up for four weeks; every week for four hours on a Zoom. And because you're talking about personal relationships, this is really important. I think when I showed up—first, let me share the imposter syndrome that I felt because now I'm taking a Harvard Business class. I looked at the roster, by the way, and it was CEOs of companies, presidents of companies, presidents of IKEA, people from Denmark, from Germany, from Iran, all over the place. People from the States, too. And I looked at my husband, we were on a walk and I started to cry. I said, "I don't think I belong in this class. I don't." Like it makes me emotional thinking about it. I said, "I don't think I belong here. Like these are presidents of companies and these are like really smart people." And my husband looked at me and he

said, “You're a really smart person, too. And you know what you have that they don't have? Business ownership experience. Grit. Commitment. Experience that you've actually done and run businesses. So, you show up as yourself and you deliver your wisdom as you should because you deserve to be there more than anyone else.”

Winn: I love that.

Nina: And so, in that class, I showed up, I was nervous. And guess what the first thing that our professor asked us to do? Because we're talking about personal stories and being personal with people. He said, “All right, class, so guess what we're gonna do? I want you to think about one core story.” We were on the phone for 30 minutes on this class, by the way, 30 minutes; that's it. “I want you to think of a core story that impacted your life or your business, and we're all gonna go around the room and we're gonna share it.” And I was like, *Oh my God, this is intense*. And by the end of this call, that first two hours was all of this sharing core stories. Guess what we learned? We cried together, we laughed together, we bonded together, we learned how much more alike than we are different. We really realized how important community and relationships are. And it allowed us to show up more openly and it allowed us to show up more vulnerably during the rest of these four weeks of class. So, when you are apprehensive about being personal with your people, you have to understand that the more you know them and the more that you put value into them and the more that you learn about what makes them tick and excited and what they value and what motivates them and inspires them, the more they will show up for you. And so, there is a personal side to this. There really truly is. And you're right. It's not about getting into all the details and all the things, but you have to know what really excites them and really lean into that in the way that you coach them and inspire them. They will be forever indebted to you when you do that. And it can't be fake. You know, we talked about a script. There's a difference between a script and, “Hi. This is what we're doing today because this is how you—” No. You are genuinely doing it because you care about them and you want to be there for them and you want to watch them grow. But yeah, you need a script to learn how you're going to retrain yourself to talk to people. That's important.

Winn: And by the way, everything that Nina is sharing with you right now, this advice that she's sharing with you about showing up for your team, having an interest in what's important to them: this does not just apply to the boss. You can be the lowest paid person in your company, in your store, in your business, brand new. But if you show up with this passion and with this practice that Nina's sharing about truly, truly caring about your fellow team members, trust me, that sets you up as a brilliant, brilliant, incredible leader.

Nina: Absolutely, yes. If you want to grow, you've got to put yourself in front of people. The right people. Which means you have to take a risk on yourself. You have to ask the questions. Be curious. Don't sit in silence. People who get in the room, they asked to get in the room inadvertently by being curious

and asking questions. So yes, I love that you're saying that because it is so important for them to also speak up and let their presence be known.

Winn: Well, I like that husband of yours. He gave you some good advice. He said you have grit. Is there a Harvard class on grit? Can you learn how to have grit?

Nina: You know, I will get to that because I'm due for another Harvard class, for sure. One of my goals, honestly, is to go to the campus and take a class live. That's one of my ultimate goals. And I will do that in the next year or two. But I don't know. They have all kind of amazing classes where you can learn so much.

Winn: They really do. I have a couple of people in my company, in my organization, who have gone through those Harvard classes as well.

Nina: They're incredible.

Winn: Okay, so because you are Harvard trained, and I love it, you said that the class was on leadership and culture. So, give us a definition, whether it came from Harvard, or it came from Nina's 29 years of experience of grit and hustle and a good husband. Tell us the definition of culture.

Nina: The definition of culture, and this is like a buzzword, right? I think *culture* was a buzzword for so long. But when you're creating a culture, you're creating a standard, you're creating a mission, you're creating values of belief that you're inviting people to be a part of. You're inviting them to be a part of something that is bigger than them. And that is what people are looking for. Culture is the way you stand on business. It's your belief system. It's your entire standard of your business. It's your core values. It is everything that oozes who you are and who you believe in. And if you miss the mark—and I did in my own business, I missed the mark for some time—it doesn't go well. Because people, yeah, people don't want to be a part of something that they don't believe in. And so, we've got to create this environment for them where they are like, “Wow, this is your mission? I believe in that, too. These are your core values? I stand aligned with that, too. This is your long-term vision for the business? That's where I want to be. You know, you believe in XYZ? That's where I come from.” And so, that inclusive part is what we're trying to create in the connection. And it has to be the way that you show up every single day. Kindness and compassion were two of my core values in my business. And it was led through every single touchpoint of my industry and salon. From the team to the person that sat in the chair, to the team member that walked in, to the phone calls, to the emails, to—that had to be a part of it and the decisions. You know, my team would say, come to me with an issue like, “Oh, you know, somebody wasn't happy with their service and, you know, I'm upset about it. And, you know, I don't know what to do.” “What do you think I would say, Sarah? How do you think I would handle that situation? If we have someone that's not happy, right? And they're kind and they just want their hair adjusted. It's just a toner situation. What do you think I'm going to say?” “She said, I think you're going to say, “Bring her in and not charge her.” “Absolutely

do that. Yes.” Right? That's part of the culture. Now, I'm not saying let people walk all over you, but we have to do what's right. And if something didn't turn out right and if we didn't deliver it as promised, we have to make good on that. And so, I gave refunds. Yes. I gave refunds. Yes, I have given refunds before. It's okay to do that. It's circumstantial. That's part of a culture that people understand that, “If I go to Nina and I ask her, I already know what she's going to say. And it's going to be led with kindness and compassion and care for people, period.” So that, long and short, is the definition of what culture is.

Winn: When you see me looking off on the side, what I was doing is taking notes as you were talking about culture. I'm writing it all down. Standard. Bigger than ourselves. It's a belief system. They're our core values. Kindness. The business oozes. I don't know how to spell oozes, though.

Nina: *[Laughs]* A lot of O's.

Winn: There are three O's and two Z's. So, I don't know if I got that one right. But no one has to read this. But you know, no, that was a great definition. You know, a lot of people say, “Oh, we don't have a culture.” No, you have a culture. Every business, the day you open, there's a culture. But sometimes that culture was created by default or by neglect, which then means that it's not a healthy, positive culture. And you better believe people walking through those doors into your business, in your company, they feel it. If you haven't identified it, trust me, they could identify it for you. They could tell you exactly what it feels like. And so, we have to be intentional with that. And what you just did was you spelled it out for us. Intentionally, this is what we're striving for. And I don't believe that—was it Sarah, the person that you used? I don't believe that Sarah gained that awareness of what Nina would decide, what Nina would say, based on one meeting.

Nina: Right.

Winn: You know, that was Nina over and over and over, day by day by day, from meetings to huddles to trainings to you name it, talking about this is who we are, this is what we stand for, this is what we're striving for. It's just a constant repetition of the culture and the belief system. So, you know, great, great message. You know, I sometimes wonder. You know, I'm a good guy and I have a lot of loyalty and my company's growing and getting bigger and bigger, thousands of people in that organization. And I sometimes wonder, 'cause I hear this a lot, that I wonder how many people are loyal to me and hardworking and they have grit and they hustle and they really deliver in the company because of my vision as a business owner, as an entrepreneur, or because they see that I'm working really hard to be a good dad. Know what I mean?

Nina: Mm-hmm. I think it's both. I think it's both for sure. Absolutely.

Winn: Yeah, Winn's a good entrepreneur, but he's also the room parent in his daughter's, you know, fifth-grade class. I think I'll be loyal to him. *[Laughs]*

Nina: *[Laughs]*

Winn: And that goes back to the whole idea of being, you know, personable with, you know, personal lives do matter in a successful business. I'm sure you've heard of this book, *Unreasonable Hospitality*. Oh my God, everybody's reading it. I'm reading it. I bought a copy for all of my employees. Here I'm endorsing this guy's book, I've never even met him. But it kind of follows along with what you're talking about here. Just the idea of creating something that's based on emotions and based on feelings and there's nothing wrong with it. Not that the numbers aren't important, not that facts don't matter, because all of those things absolutely matter, but it's this side of it. So, here's an interesting question. How can leaders hold people accountable without damaging culture?

Nina: Ooh, that's a good one. And I love this question. I mean, I think we've spoken about this for an hour. It's leading the conversation with kindness and compassion. So, we can still have a coaching session with someone and hold them accountable and be kind. And I think when we're holding people accountable, we always have to take it back to the standard and the values of the business. And that's why I love having people, I love having your team, no matter what industry you're in, get your team involved with creating your standard and mission and values. Maybe you do it together. If you don't have one, include the team. Because now they've created it, they're a part of that. They've laid that foundation. And so, accountability isn't about getting people in trouble or yelling at them or making them feel less than, it's actually about empowering them. Because accountability is one of the most important things that you have to have and be equipped with as a leader. Because if you don't hold your people accountable, you're actually doing them a disservice. You're saying, "Go ahead, do the thing, do whatever you want. May not be great, that's okay. May not hit your goal, who cares?" You know, that's basically what you're saying. And is it hard to have tough conversations? Sure. It's never fun to say, you know, "You're late. We've talked about this three times. Why? What's going on? How do we fix this? How do we repair it? I just want to let you know that when you're late, it not only impacts me, it impacts the rest of the team. So, let's come up with a solution together. However, I don't want to have this conversation again." There is a way to navigate that. And again, everything really has to stem from the way that you speak to people and the tone that you're speaking to them and that you're making them feel that they are important. Even when you're having a coaching session when they have to be held accountable for something.

Winn: And we all grow because of accountability.

Nina: Yes.

Winn: You go to the gym, you have a trainer, that trainer is holding you accountable: "What's going on there?"

Nina: True.

Winn: And we've just made this part of our belief system. I wrote about it in my book. It's part of our employee manuals or guidelines and trainings and has been

since day one. And this is what it says. It says: *We don't assume that people are doing their jobs. We don't expect that people are doing their jobs. We inspect.* And the reason why we have that in there is because without saying this and putting it out there, whenever we came around to inspect, people would get offended by that. "Wait a minute. Why are you, you don't think I'm a good employee? You don't trust me? Why are you inspecting me?" No, no, let's put it out there. We're going to inspect everybody. This is who we are. We don't assume, we don't expect; we inspect. It's just part of who we are. It's how we do things around here. And nobody, because we talk about it so much, people don't take it personally. Or at least I hope they don't take it personally.

Nina: Yeah. I love that. That's great.

Winn: Nina, let's start to wrap this up. And I feel like we need to do a version two and then probably a version three of this great information. What is one business lesson you have learned the hard way that every entrepreneur should hear?

Nina: Well, I would say not trusting myself. And I'm going to tell everybody this: you have to trust yourself and your gut. Even if you feel like you made the wrong choice, it was made for a reason. And there's a learning experience behind that. And so, I think, so many times when I wanted to really listen to myself and trust my gut and I didn't, it got me into some things. And it took me some time to really believe in myself enough and to trust myself enough that I can do this, I can run businesses, I can. I'm smart enough to do this. And I think the sooner you learn to really trust your instincts and listen to your gut and believe in your decision making—it doesn't mean it's gonna be perfect. We're not looking for perfect here. You're gonna make bad decisions. That's part of the growth. It's part of the success. I would lean heavily into that. I wish I would have trusted myself more, for sure. It would have saved me a lot of headache, but here we are. Still here.

Winn: I think we all believe that there is energy and wisdom that we all have the right to tap into. Call that whatever you want to call it, but I believe that we tap into that. So, you're right. If that information was going to be communicated to us for our good, it would come in the form of *this is what my gut is telling me*. Great advice. Trust your gut. But I also don't believe that you have been sitting around not doing things to improve yourself and to educate yourself and to grow yourself, which then would grow and develop that gut instinct, that trust that you have in yourself.

Nina: Yep, for sure.

Winn: Nina, do you have a final message for our listeners?

Nina: Man, a final message. I think whatever business you're in, whatever stage of your life you're in, in terms of leading a business, working hard, being an entrepreneur, doesn't really matter. I think we really, really have to appreciate the people side of it. I think the relationship side of it is so insanely important.

We've gotten away from that a little bit, I think, when COVID happened. There was a little bit of a disconnect. We went in one direction and we forgot that we're actually here to serve people and started coming up with really hard boundaries and, "No, I'm not taking that client anymore and I don't want to see them and I'm not working at night." We went real hard on one side. At the end of the day, the people you serve are human. The teams that you have are human. You're human and dealing with things every day and you're allowed to be human and be authentic in the way you show up. I think that it doesn't matter what industry you're in, especially with a service-based business, the people are the heart and soul. So, learn how to master people. If you want to make more money, learn how to lead and master people, your team. Learn how to lead and treat clients. You are leading them too, you know? And really just learn how to take care of people and lead them in a way from a space of kindness and compassion, because that truly, truly does go a very long way when you're running businesses, when you're just starting out, you know, in an industry. It really, truly does go a long, long way. So, I think the relationship side of it is so incredibly important.

Winn: So beautiful.

Nina: Thank you.

Winn: So, Nina, how can people connect with you and find you and once they do, what are you wanting them to gain from that connection with you?

Nina: I live on Instagram, so you can find me there. My page, just my name: @NinaTulio. And you'll find a lot of value there on my page, Winn. Talking about people-first culture, leadership, pricing, profit, all of the things. I think just dive into my content and, you know, pick and choose what it is that you like and what you can gain from it. I'm also very responsive in my DMs. I run my page. I read every single one of them. And I always encourage people to reach out with questions. If you need support, like, I am going to be rooting for you and I will answer your message and give you the best advice that I can. So, you can find me on Instagram. You can check out my website. I have a ton of resources on my website. You could buy my book on my website. There are a lot of things that you can get into on my website as well. You'll find a lot of value there as well.

Winn: And by the way, I've gone down that Nina Tulio rabbit hole on Instagram and it was a good rabbit hole to go down.

Nina: *[Laughs]* Well, good. I'm glad. Thank you.

Winn: Nina, thank you so much. I'm so proud of you. Again, congratulations: Educator of the Year.

Nina: Thank you.

Winn: What an award. I'm proud of you.

Nina: Thank you so much for having me. It's really such an honor to be here with you and just chat with you and also learn from you, too. I'm always learning, too. Thank you.

Winn: Thanks, sweetheart.