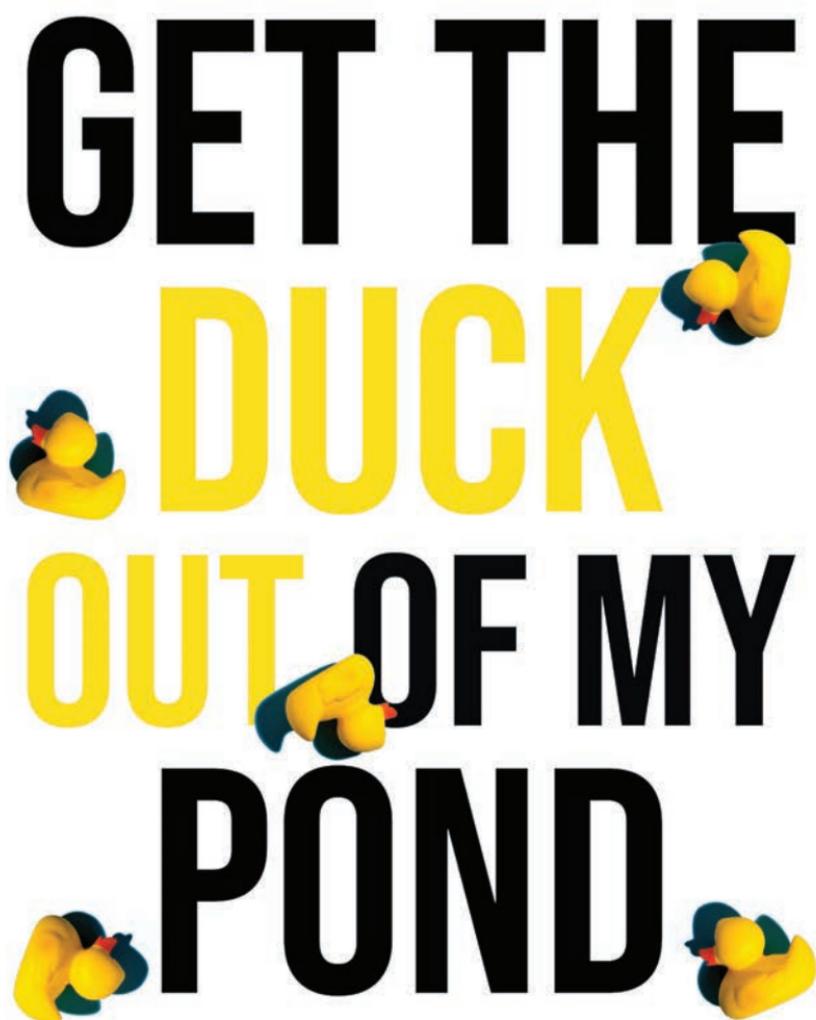


GET THE DUCK OUT OF MY POND



HOW TO START A BUSINESS WITH YOUR TEEN, BUILD THEIR
CONFIDENCE & LAUNCH THEM SUCCESSFULLY INTO ADULTHOOD

SANDY BRANTLEY

 **AUTHOR
ACADEMY** elite

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PART 1

DEFINING THE PROBLEM



CHAPTER 1

HELP! THE DUCK IS DROWNING

When the phone rang, I knew exactly who it was. If I'm honest, I was sort of annoyed. I was busy and didn't have time for nonsense that day. There was always one thing that could interrupt my schedule in a hiccup: that ominous call every mom knows is about to change the course of her day. I know because it was happening almost everyday. I would pick up the phone to a *sick* child on the other end, wanting to come home from school. It was becoming more and more frustrating. I would pick her up, and these phantom tummy aches would miraculously get better the moment we entered the door to our house, even sooner if we passed her favorite fast

food restaurant on the way. At first, I thought Samantha simply needed to toughen up a little—after all, a little tummy ache was not reason enough to come home. Clearly, they weren't real stomach pains anyway. She was probably bored at school, or maybe she wasn't getting along with one of her classmates—so I thought.

Samantha was tender-hearted and shy. A people pleaser, she didn't understand why anyone would be mean towards others. She allowed other kids to take advantage of her kind nature. Being nice didn't seem to make things any easier for her at school. As a heavy girl, she was unfortunately an easy target for teasing. If someone at school was teasing her, she needed to grow some thicker skin, right? Who hadn't dealt with a mean girl at some point growing up? We all have and we survived. Why should she be any different?

When the call came each day, I would fuss at her and tell her to stick it out. Truth be told, most days I would tell her to “suck it up.” I assured her I would be there to pick her up as soon as school was over. Day after day, the calls were the same. Day after day, I'd tell her the same thing...until *today*.

When I answered the call, the sound in her voice was new to me. This call was different than the rest. I had never heard her so scared.

There was a terror in her voice that immediately sent a shudder down my spine. Samantha had locked herself in a bathroom stall and called me from her cell phone, begging for help. She was terrified and uncontrollably sobbing. I dropped everything in an instant. I could not get to the school fast enough. That afternoon, I found out that my daughter had been the victim of cruel bullying. This was not the kind of bullying I nor anyone I knew had faced as a child, but cruel torment. For months, her bullies had been tormenting and threatening her in the classroom, in the hallways, after school, and even online. It had been escalating over time. Today, they had terrorized her so badly that she was afraid they were going to seriously hurt her.

Why didn't she tell me sooner? Why didn't I see it? What kind of mother doesn't know what's happening in her child's life? I had watched her shutting down. I knew she was extremely shy and had no sense of self-confidence or self-worth. She had no friends to speak of and spent all her time in her room. How did I miss those signals?

The days following that call were tough for all of us. As a family, we were angry. As her mom, I was pissed off! I had such a heavy sense of guilt. I pulled her close and cried for a few days. Secretly, I wanted to send a hit squad to take

her tormentors out. That's the truth. Publicly, I was calm and focused on helping Samantha move past it.

We went to the school and spoke with the principal, teachers, and other students. The shocking part was the students all knew what had been happening. Many had watched but had been too afraid to step in. Each child had been afraid that the bullies would turn their attention to them. What was far more shocking was that the teachers, staff, and principal claimed to be unaware that anything was taking place. Their response to *fixing* the problem was less than acceptable. They told us there was nothing they could do "unless a teacher witnessed it" on property. If they witnessed the bullying, they had a no tolerance policy and would suspend the bullies. What bully is going to do anything in the presence of a teacher? Seriously? That's the best you can do? If, on the outside chance, a teacher witnessed something the best you could do is suspend? Suspend these thugs that had altered my child's emotional and physical safety? Suspend these bullies for torturing and tormenting a girl who already struggled with self-image? Suspension would not be nearly enough, and certainly doing nothing (since it had not been witnessed by an adult) was worse.

We quickly realized we needed to move her to a new school to give her a fresh start. For her personal safety and emotional security, we had to take her out of that toxic environment. We had no recourse on the kids involved, but we could protect Samantha and begin the process of healing. We also locked down her access to social media. She did not need to see or hear what any of them were saying. We removed her from every situation where these bullies could gain access to her. Removing her from the active bullying was only the first step to true healing. Eventually, the real question started to bubble to the surface. What do we do now? How do we rebuild her self-confidence? High school would be over in a few years, and she needed to be ready to handle college and adulthood. I had no idea where to go or what to do. We talked to school administrators, guidance counselors, psychologists, other parents, and even our pastor. None of them had a solution. Bullying does such damage to a child, yet no one knew what to do to make it better. What's worse is no one wanted to offer solutions, seemingly for fear of their ideas failing. So we were on our own. If we hoped to make a difference in Samantha's future, we had to come up with our own solution. Little did we know that our answer was coming in the most unlikely way.

Out of the blue, Samantha asked me to join a direct sales company with her. She had been looking for a part-time job for a while. She was hoping to put some extra money away for college. A dual-enrolled student in high school and college at the time, her class schedule made it very hard to find a job that would fit. She started researching potential jobs online and found this one. This particular company allowed teens to join the company as long as they were part of a mother/daughter team. So here she was asking me if I would do it with her. Ummmm.... No. I was not a sales person. I had no interest in being in direct sales. I lived in the corporate world. In fact, all my life I had looked down at the many stay-at-home-moms I knew who were part of direct sales. I figured they didn't have anything better to do with their time; clearly, these women were simply bored and needed something to do to keep them busy. I was about to get schooled.

I hated the idea, but I didn't want to let my daughter down. I began researching this company to find out as much as I could. Surely, there was a reason not to do this. Online research turned up nothing but positives, but still, I was skeptical. Then, we found out that the national convention was less than one week away on the other side of the country. If we could even get a ticket to go,

how on earth could we find airfare and a hotel, let alone afford it? Truly nothing but divine intervention cleared the path for us to attend. My husband had frequent flyer miles for both my daughter and me to use. There happened to be one room still left at convention price at the host hotel. We found someone planning to go who was late in her pregnancy and was told she was unable to fly. She sold us her ticket. These things and a million other little things that had to fall into place suddenly did. In a day and a half, all our obstacles cleared and our trip suddenly materialized. Does anything like this ever happen? It certainly hadn't happened in my life, and I knew it wasn't happening without God's intervention. I started thinking something big was about to happen, but I didn't want to believe it.

My plan was to spend the days at the convention scrutinizing everything. If there were holes to poke in this business, I would find them. I watched the stage presentations, the class facilitators, and the other representatives. I even watched the staff behind the scenes. I was determined to find some reason not to do this. All I found was kindness, caring, and positivity. Darnit. The entire weekend we talked about the business. Samantha continued to beg. The

true miracle was watching her interact and thrive with all the other women there. She was having conversations with strangers, naturally and confidently. This bullied child, who often was afraid to talk to people she had known for years, was having conversations with strangers. I was shocked, and I watched as she interacted with these women. She laughed and cried. It had been a long while since I'd seen her really laugh like that. This mother's heart was *full*.

Something happened on our flight home that made the decision to give this a try very easy for me. With a little catch in her voice, Samantha leaned over to me and said, "Mom, my whole life people have told me I am not pretty enough, skinny enough, or good enough. I watched these women this week and realized they are just like me. They are all different and beautiful. I know now that I *am* good enough the way I am... the way God made me. They are making a difference in the lives of others, and I can do the same."

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My heart burst, and in true mom fashion, I did exactly what every mom would do: I bawled my eyes out! I mean I was in a full-out ugly cry, sitting on the airplane as people stared at me. My daughter was right. That realization, that moment was priceless. She could make a difference, and I had to give her that opportunity. I decided if we never made a dollar in this business, that moment of realization for her was worth it all. And our journey began.

To be honest, I didn't expect much from our brand-new little business. Not only did I expect Samantha to lose interest quickly, I believed our friends and family would be the only people interested in buying from her. I figured we would exhaust them in about three months and I'd be off the hook, six months on the outside. At least I would have supported her interests and gotten her out of the house a few times. Then, we could close up business, and life would go back to normal. That's winning, right? You bet. I had no idea what was about to happen.

First, I realized I owed a big apology to all the homemakers I labeled as *bored* for being in direct sales. Boy, was I wrong. The first few months were not a cakewalk. This business was a great opportunity. We needed to figure out how to use it, but had no idea how to work together. Like

every parent and teen out there, we struggled to communicate and find common ground.

I realized this was a real opportunity to teach my daughter, not only about sales and business, but about life. I had to approach this business as a mentor, not as her mom. After some struggles and a few short months, we began finding real success. Within six months, we had earned our first incentive trip. Within eight months, we had a growing team across the United States and Canada. By our second national convention, Samantha was standing on the stage, accepting an award given to only one teen each year for being the most inspiring. In the words of the company's founder, Samantha was "exceptional," and we were one of the top producing mother/daughter teams in the company.

With each success, Samantha grew and matured a little more. She was learning about money, how to talk to people, how to run a business, and even how to lead others. The more she did, the more I watched her confidence grow. Women seemed to really connect with her story. How many women haven't dealt with a mean girl or bully in their lifetime? Inherently, these women connected with Samantha on a very personal level. Samantha started every event and party by telling her very personal story. Each time, she

would win over a new crowd of people, all willing to support her and her goals. That's who we are as people—we root for the underdog. We want to see a childhood success story, and Samantha was living it. With each tiny success, I watched the emotional scars from being bullied fade a little more.

Getting to this point wasn't magic—and it wasn't easy. But after months of dedicated work and encouraging each other, we operated this business together and found true triumphs. The real success would come after a few years and much more experience when she became an adult. That shy, terrified teen with zero self-confidence is now a confident, radiant young woman, thanks to the opportunity and experience of running a successful, fulfilling business with an intentional growth plan.

While I will always recommend and be grateful to the direct sales company we chose for giving us the unique opportunity to work together, it wasn't the specific company that developed the changes in Samantha. Any business your teen is capable of running can provide the opportunities for personal growth. You can choose the business that best suits your personality, interests, time availability, and financial investment. We loved that our company celebrated teens and

offered regular incentives that made it fun and motivating to keep reaching new goals. If your business doesn't offer these things for you, you will need to recreate these dynamics within your business yourself to keep your teen's interest and give you goals to strive for together. You will want to consider this when choosing a business.

The key to success is to use a common goal and a strategic, intentional growth plan to develop your child's confidence and skill set. You can't tell a child to be confident. It's like telling an orange to be purple. You have to give your teen continual, repeatable opportunities that will promote confidence and growth with each positive experience. In this book, I will share with you the key things we learned throughout our journey. You will also discover how to develop your own growth plan so you can enjoy a closer relationship with your teen through creating a true partnership. Through business, any parent or caring adult can better their future generation for life after high school. By embracing strategic business practices and taking advantage of the opportunities that come from running that business with your teen *now*, your little duckling can be ready to leave the pond—and thrive—when the time comes.

My whole life people
said I wasn't
GOOD ENOUGH

Pretty enough or
Skinny enough.

I know now that

I AM
Enough

Just the way I am

- Samantha Brantley



If your **TEEN**
doesn't
FAIL *Often,*
you're doing
Something
WRONG



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge my faith publicly. I'm grateful every minute of my life for my savior Jesus Christ who carries and guides me every single day. He is my anchor and provides my moral compass in all I do.

I want to say “**Thank you**” from the bottom of my heart to:

My amazing husband, **Sean**, who is my best friend, biggest cheerleader and source of strength. Thank you for loving me unconditionally, for knowing the right thing to say and when to say nothing at all. I love you baby!

My daughter, **Samantha**, who inspires me to not only be a better mom, but a better person. Thank you for reaching for the stars and pushing me to do the same.

My son, **Doug**, who challenges me to think outside the box and look at things in a different way. Thank you for having such a beautiful, giving spirit.

My parents, **Bob and Hope Weiss**, who raised me as they live their lives, with great love and integrity.

My tribe who are all smart, strong, amazing women. To me, they will always be **LEGENDS**. Thank you for reminding me to stay in my own lane.

My editor, **Ana Prokos**, who has become a valued, lifelong friend. I could not have made it through this process without you!

The “**Duck Pond**” community for doing life together. Life is so much better when you don’t have to do it alone.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Books & Audio

- **Get The Duck Out of My Pond: The Success Journal**, Sandy Brantley
- **Growing Up Social**, Gary Chapman and Arlene Pellicane
- **The 5 Love Languages of Teenagers**, Gary Chapman
- **Success for Teens**, Editors of the Success Foundation
- **Raising Teens in a Contrary Culture**, Mark Gregston
- **Tough Guys and Drama Queens Parent's Guide**, Mark Gregston
- **Screens and Teens**, Kathy Koch
- **Daring and Disruptive**, Lisa Messenger
- **Sometimes You Win Sometimes You Learn for Teens**, John C. Maxwell
- **The Teens Guide to Social Media and Mobile Devices**, Jonathan McKee
- **Notes to a Young Entrepreneur**, Gary Nealon
- **Teen Entrepreneur Toolbox**, Anthony O'Neal

- **Smart Money Smart Kids**, Dave Ramsey and Rachel Cruz
- **No More Perfect Moms**, Jill Savage
- **Become a Teen Boss**, Kevin Speights
- **Micro Business for Teens Workbook**, Carol Topp

Organizations, Websites & Social Media

- **The Duck Wrangler (aka Sandy's Website)** TheDuckWrangler.com
- Admission Smarts admissionsmarts.com
- BossMoms facebook.com/groups/BossMomGroup
- Heartlight; Parenting Today's Teens heartlightministries.org
- Grown & Flown facebook.com/grownandflown
- Parent Engagement Network parentengagementnetwork.org
- The Success Foundation SuccessFoundation.org
- Teenpreneur Inc Teenpreneurinc.org



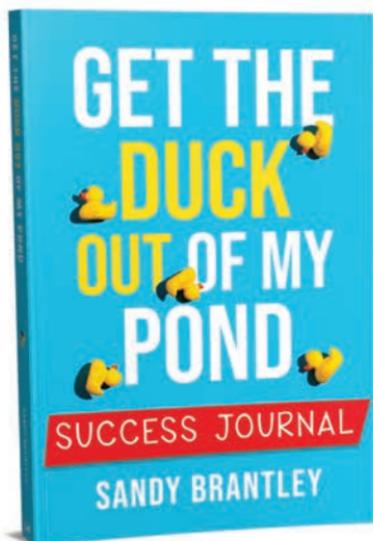
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Teen growth evangelist Sandy Brantley is a former fortune 50 executive, speaker, trainer, coach, wife and mom of 2. Known as “The Duck Wrangler,” she consults with individuals and companies across the U.S. in leadership and developing teens using good business practices and strategies. Her goal is to foster a more employable generation of young adults. After witnessing the cruel affects of bullying on her teen daughter, she started a journey that has changed both of their lives forever.

Sandy has had a somewhat eclectic career including being an on-air guest host for HSN and owning a successful curriculum development company. Never interested in direct sales, Sandy decided to join a social selling company at the plea of her then 16-year-old daughter Samantha. Seeing it as a way to help Samantha heal, find success and gain confidence, Sandy jumped in with both feet. Within a year, they became top producers in their company, built an international team, and put money away for college. Sandy used her knowledge in business and leadership coupled with lessons she learned during their journey to

create an easy to follow growth strategy. This strategy helped transform Samantha from a shy, self-conscious teen into a confident, thriving young adult. Sandy now shares what she's learned in her quest to empower parents, teachers, child professionals and businesses to better prepare their own teens to launch successfully.

Your Next Steps with
THE DUCK WRANGLER



GRAB A COPY OF THE SUCCESS JOURNAL

- Create daily success habits
- Open lines of communication
- Track meeting agendas & tasks
- Develop a business training plan
- Focus on modeling good character
- Document weekly goals & progress



FINALIZE THE AGREEMENT

Download our FREE parent-teen agreement
theDuckWrangler.com/contract

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DISCOVER OUR ONLINE COURSES

Dive Deeper & Start Parenting with Intention

find out more
theduckwrangler.com



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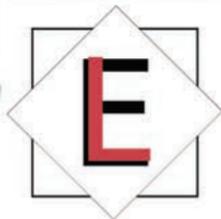
a community committed to launching our teens successfully



...come do LIFE with us
#theduckwrangler

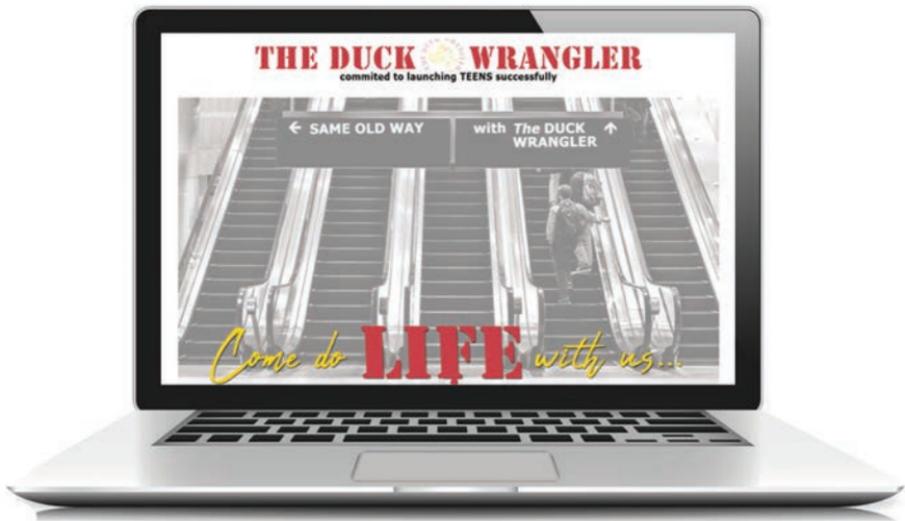
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