

What was the greatest challenge of building Unruly Studios?

Building a physical product was an early challenge because I'm not a technical founder. I overcame this by going to a local makerspace. I learned how to prototype the first version there, which was helpful. Once I had that, it was easier to bring on the team when they could see the vision and my determination to bring it to the world. As a startup, you have to do a lot with a little. It's a common challenge for any startup, figuring out, "How am I going to do this?" especially when you have limited resources.

What made you become an entrepreneur?

My parents owned a restaurant where I grew up in NH, so I grew up in an entrepreneurial family. I also learned to code at an early age and was an athlete. In business school, I found a problem I wanted to solve around edtech. I wanted to make STEM more accessible to kids and bring it to kids in new and interesting ways through sports and physical activity, and I fell in love with this problem. I realized I was on to something pretty early because of the spark I saw when [I] tried out the experience.

What is on Unruly Studio's plate right now? What is its greatest priority?

Our mission right now is to bring Splats to kids. We always welcome feedback from kids, parents, or teachers as we make the final improvements to our manufacturing and software. We are busy building content and software experiences to prepare for our launch. Every two weeks we are getting updated Splats. It is an exciting time because we are seeing all the work we have put in throughout the last few years pay off.

What long-term impact do you hope to have on education, and how will you measure that impact?

I want to bring kids into STEM who did not know they were interested before. I hope that, in the future, kids go on to study STEM or work in the technology industry who started out playing with Unruly products. I hope kids see Unruly as the reason they fell in love with coding and computer science, and know how to apply it to the real world. I want these kids to feel empowered and competent in their abilities. We measure this impact by noting how many kids have a different attitude toward STEM or coding after using our products.

What advice can you give to a female entrepreneur who is raising her first seed money?

Don't take things personally. None of the feedback or negative reactions you get are about you. Keep your energy high and keep at it. Start to build your track record as early as possible, and find an executive coach or mentor who you can meet with regularly as you fundraise. Also, do not limit yourself to events targeting women only, or geared toward women and to women-only circles. While those are important networks, you will need to work with a diverse group of people to be successful.

In your view, what makes a good entrepreneur?

Persistence and the ability to keep going despite setbacks. You cannot predict what is going to happen, and there are constantly changes in the plan. You have to be adaptive and have a mentality of optimism, no matter what happens. I have heard it called the “air of inevitability,” and I like that way of thinking about the success of your startup. Those who stick with it are the ones who are successful. When you run a marathon and hit mile twenty, you say, “Well, this is really hard,” but you have to keep going.

How did the LearnLaunch experience help you get where you are now?

LearnLaunch was a remarkable program because of its focus on edtech. It is a growing field, but there are not many people in the world who know how to run a successful edtech business, and LearnLaunch did a great job of consolidating information, both successes and failures, and connecting us to relevant experts. They were hands-on and jumped in with me, which helped us move quickly as a small team.