

What Does It Mean to Start a Business?

A clarity guide for the decision before the paperwork, pressure, or performance.

By Shanna Mavis

THECOACHFORBUSINESS.COM

You're not late. You're not behind. You're asking the right question.

Most people don't pause to ask what it actually means to start a business. They jump straight to the "how." They want to know how to file, how to sell, or how to market.

This guide exists for the moment *before* that. Starting a business isn't just a set of actions. It is a decision that reshapes how you spend your time, make choices, and carry responsibility.

Clarity now prevents confusion later.

It's Not Just "Having an Idea"

Ideas are exciting because they feel like momentum. However, an idea alone does not create a business; it creates possibility. A business begins when you decide to steward that idea intentionally through planning and execution.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, roughly 20% of businesses fail in the first year, often due to a lack of planning rather than a bad idea.

THE REALITY CHECK

Instead of asking, "Is this a good idea?" ask yourself, "Am I willing to carry what this idea requires?"

It Means Taking Responsibility

Business ownership is often marketed as freedom. But real freedom grows out of structure. As the owner, you no longer answer to a boss. You answer to outcomes. You decide when work happens, and crucially, when it stops.

This is the core concept of The E-Myth Revisited by Michael Gerber: distinguishing between working "in" your business and working "on" it.

THE REALITY CHECK

Freedom in business grows out of structure, not the absence of it.

It Changes Your View of Money

Money is personal. When business and money intersect, it can surface fear. But in business, numbers are just information. Tracking is not judgment; it is simply visibility.

A U.S. Bank study found that 82% of business failures are due to poor cash flow management and visibility.

THE REALITY CHECK

You don't need to be naturally "good with money" to start. You just need to be willing to look at it honestly.

It Requires Consistency, Not Hustle

Hustle culture suggests success comes from intensity. In reality, most businesses are built through steady, often unglamorous consistency. Showing up even when growth is slow is the real work.

According to FreshBooks data, most small business owners take at least 2 to 3 years to become consistently profitable.

THE REALITY CHECK

Burnout is not a prerequisite for success. A business grows through rhythm, not urgency.

It Means Thinking in Systems

"Systems" sounds corporate. It really just means "a repeatable way of doing things." How you track income or how you answer emails are systems.

As James Clear writes in Atomic Habits: "You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems."

THE REALITY CHECK

Start simple. Systems should serve you, not overwhelm you.

It Is a Long-Term Conversation

There is pressure to decide everything upfront: structure, pricing, branding. But most clarity is revealed over time. You are allowed to learn, adjust, and grow into the role.

The "Lean Startup" methodology emphasizes the Build-Measure-Learn feedback loop, validating that businesses evolve rather than launch perfectly.

THE REALITY CHECK

You are allowed to begin before everything is figured out.

So what does it really mean?

It means saying yes to responsibility, learning, and consistency. It is less about becoming someone new and more about becoming intentional with what you are already carrying.

"Starting does not mean locking yourself into a final version. It means giving yourself permission to begin."

You don't need to decide everything today. Whether you need a sounding board, a strategy, or just a place to start, I am here to help you navigate the beginning.

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