

**Romy Taormina and Carla Falcone**  
**Psi Bands**

Lorin: Romy and Carla, I'd like to get a sense of how it all started, and how you ended up working together?

Carla: Romy, do you mind if I start?

Romy: Yes, go for it!

Carla: Romy and I were friends and coworkers. We both worked together at an advertising agency and a friendship grew from that. Romy started having babies before I did and I watched her have severe morning sickness. When I got pregnant and started having morning sickness, I called Romy right away and said, "What do I do?" She suggested that I get the ugly grey acupressure bands. She said that wrist acupressure helped her immensely and hopefully would help me – and it did! During my eight months of morning sickness, I was with those bands twenty-four/seven.

Lorin: Wow!

Carla: Yeah! At my baby shower that Romy threw for me, she said something like, "Oh, your new maternity outfit is so cute. Too bad you have to wear these ugly sweatbands." So that started the conversation. We started saying, "We could make them so much cuter and so much more functional! This is lacking. That is lacking. They are not waterproof. They are not adjustable." The list went on and on and we both kind of just stopped and looked at each other and said, "This is so Oprah! We're going to be on Oprah!"

We got real giddy and excited and it was really just kind of a side conversation between Romy and I. From there we just kept tossing around the idea for probably about six months before we finally decided, “Gosh darn it, let’s move forward!” So, then the question became, “How in the world do you make something out of nothing? You have no idea where to go. Where do you start? It’s immense! I had a friend that was a product designer, so I gave him a call and asked him to help us start out. I shared with the idea with him and, he loved it. He said, “Not only do I want to help you, but I want to become a partner.” So, the three of us met and while he did napkin sketches, Romy and I were talking about what we envisioned in our minds. From there, a partnership was formed and we started the process.

Lorin: Oh, wow! How many of us in the world have had an idea for a business, or a product idea? Or a service idea that’s just crazy and unique and we don’t do anything with it. What you did differently is you acted on it!

Romy: You know, it was truly one of those “necessity is the mother of invention products. We took an idea and a product was born.

Lorin: So when the product was born, was one of you more the visionary? Was there a vision that you had that one of you or both of you created together, or a vision that one of you had that you attached yourself to?

Carla: I think we both felt very strongly immediately that this was a great idea! It was really that every fiber in our being said, “We’ve got something here!”

Lorin: So, your intuition was working.

Carla: Yes! And we just held onto that and we still hold onto it.

Lorin: I'm interested in hearing how you set and achieve goals. What is your process as a team? How do goals affect what you have accomplished, or don't they?

Romy: I would say that we do set goals between us as three business partners: Carla, Peter, and myself. We have regular weekly meetings just to stay in touch with each other above and beyond the everyday conversations that we have on the phone or via email. We also have an annual meeting where we get together and strategize. We have that coming up in October, where we review goals and set them for the next year. Every three months we evaluate them to make sure we are on top of things and on target, and whether we need to re-evaluate what our goals and objectives need to be.

Lorin: How old is your business?

Romy: We launched in the marketplace in October 2007.

Lorin: I love to hear how structured your goals have been, almost since day one.

Romy: Yes, I think it's key that we *all* make sure that we all have a shared vision and goal. We have had a couple of bumps along the way where we've hired someone that doesn't have that vision, and there have been repercussions from that. So sharing the same goals is key. Also, we have had a business plan in place since the get-go and I think that a lot of businesses don't. They don't see the value of it. But, we feel really strongly that it sets a good foundation. It's an evolving piece of art or work or whatever you want to call it, but it does set down that foundation and helps us clearly articulate what it is we have in mind.

Lorin: Romy, so, when you say a business plan, is it one of those forty to sixty page documents or more? Or, is it more as you described, more of a vision board that captures what the company's vision and mission is?

Romy: Well, you know, I think it's probably a combination of that. It's probably something like 20 pages and the marketing plan is separate from that, although, it's integrated into the plan. It's setting out a vision for the company, but it's also knocking out the overall goals and objectives and what the competition is like. If you don't have the research to back up what you are about to engage in, you really have nothing to go from, other than your gut. So, I think that it is a combination of intuition and research.

Lorin: Beautiful! Research and knowledge of your industry is what I hear you saying. I just think that it's really important to underscore here that you have been doing this planning and goal setting from day one. That it didn't just come after a wild success! It took that to get to your success.

Carla: Correct. The first thing we did was say, let's sit down and create a business plan – research the idea, research the market, research the heck out of it, to make sure this is viable. Yeah, our gut says it's fabulous and the best thing since sliced bread, but we need validation, and we need hard solid proof before we really hook into it.

Lorin: What would you say your most rewarding accomplished goal has been thus far?

Romy: For me, I would say it's the number of people we are helping to relieve such a debilitating medical condition. The testimonials that come in are so heartwarming and fulfilling and that definitely keeps me charged.

Lorin: At the beginning, was it that intentional?

Romy: Absolutely! Absolutely! What I didn't anticipate was that we would be role modeling for other businesswomen. I didn't realize that would be part of our

journey as well, and that's also been very enjoyable and fulfilling for me. I think I can speak for Carla that it's been fulfilling for her as well. From the get-go, we both knew that we were going to be helping so many people to relieve such a debilitating problem. And, for some, it's an everyday problem.

Lorin: The next area that I want to look at is balance and how you take care of yourself. As moms and business owners, how do you do it all?

Romy: I think that is probably our largest challenge because we both have children – young children – and so we are juggling quite a bit. But, I wouldn't have it any other way. I guess a perfect example of that is I am sitting at a coffee shop right now. My boys are in camp today. The camp is about forty minutes away from my home-based office, and to utilize my time most efficiently, I am sitting at this coffee shop having this conversation with you, knowing that I am really close to the boys should anything happen! I am available to them, first and foremost, but if it's not an emergency, I can get my work done during the day, whether they are in school or camp, and it's just trying to achieve that balance. I don't think anybody's ever going to do it necessarily one hundred percent, because we just can't be everything to everyone one hundred percent of the time. We have to be okay with that.

Lorin: Beautifully said. You just said something so important, Romy, and that is that we can't get caught up in the nine to five idea of I have to be at the office, because it doesn't matter where we are to do big work.

Romy: Right!

Lorin: As soon as we understand that, as women, moms, and women business owners, all of a sudden we can be much more powerful, because we can think about being powerful on the soccer field taking a call or in a coffee shop as you are.

Romy: Right; that's the beauty of this day and age. With all of the ways everyone is connected all the time in some way, it allows you to be more creative and flexible in your work. Flexibility and creativity are key points in maintaining, or helping to maintain, balance.

Carla: The piece of advice that I would want to share with other women entrepreneurs is just that when you are with the kids, try to be with the kids. Tell them when you are not. Try to set up a specific event.

Lorin: That's actually such a very spiritual thing to say. Eckhart Tolle, for example, talks about being present in the Now. I think multi-tasking is for the birds, so I hear what you're saying; that's perfect.

Carla: I just learned another lesson recently. I have two young boys and I'll say, "I am going upstairs to work," and they'll say, "No, Mommy, I want you to play more; I want you to play more." And I'll say, "I have to do this." There's always that little bit of a struggle. So, the other day, my son who just turned five, who I thought was too young to understand business and work and why I am doing this, made a comment about how he would like this really big house that we had just driven by. It was probably about ten thousand square feet. I said, "Well, honey, that's why I am working, that's one of the reasons why I have PsiBands, so that we can get you one of those houses one day." And something clicked in him. I had taken it for granted that he was too young to understand, so I sat down and explained to him the reasons why I am working and now I don't have that struggle. He has not been arguing with me about, "Please don't go to work." He's accepted it and understands it now.

Lorin: Interesting.

Romy: Yeah, I think we need to give more credit to our children and explain what we are doing.

Lorin: Now that you're in business and have families, how do you work in taking care of yourself, and what does that have to do with your business, if anything?

Carla: I know for me personally, it's huge! Because if I feel better mentally and physically, I am going to be in a better mood, more alert, more energetic, and more enthusiastic. It just affects my whole being. So for me it's just little things. Am I drinking enough water? I like really bright rooms and I've set up my office so that it's very bright. I have happy things all around me. I just recently created a vision board that is right next to my desk that I look at throughout the day, so that feeds my mental side. I get some form of exercise every day. Maybe I don't have time to go to the gym every day for an hour the way I used to but maybe it's running around and playing soccer in the back yard with the kids for twenty minutes or making some kind of fun adventure walk to the mailbox with the kids. I think it's just making sure that I am paying attention to my needs and wants.

You know, I feel yucky if I sit in my pajamas and work all day and I could easily do that! But instead, I get up and put on a cute outfit and I put on makeup even though I am going to be sitting in my office for six hours and nobody is going to see me.

Lorin: So, you both work from home. How far away are you from each other?

Romy: We're in different states!

Carla: Yeah, I was in Seattle and Romy was on the Monterey Peninsula (of California) in the Pacific Grove.

Lorin: Interesting, so your corporate offices are each in your own homes, which I love! I think that's such an important point to make. Excellent! And how does it work for you?

Romy: Overall, it's great, because we do have that flexibility. We rely heavily on email and cell phones and scanners, and then we try to have regularly scheduled meetings in person, too, whenever we can.

Lorin: I am going to switch gears a little bit. How important has money been to drive you to do this business? Is it the big driver? If not, how does money play a role?

Romy: Well, I definitely think it's a driver. I think if anybody denied it, then they would be lying. I have been an entrepreneur ever since I was a little girl selling Girl Scout cookies, popcorn, candy bars, or whatever. But, for me, it was just something that I really enjoy doing. I think that's part of who I am as a person. I just love that element of selling something to someone that is going to be a benefit to them. The fact is that we all have expenses to pay and we all would like to take nice vacations and, obviously, there are core family values we have that take priority over money. Money does allow us to do things that we would not otherwise be able to do, so I think it is a driving force.

Lorin: Carla, what would you like to add?

Carla: I would say, yes, money is a driver. It is part of business, but I think back to a woman I respect dearly who told me several years ago that if you follow your joy and passion everything else will fall into place, and I truly believe that. I am doing something I enjoy; I am working with people I enjoy, and I have a passion for what I am doing. I am fulfilled by it, and now, sure enough, the money is coming.

Lorin: Perfect!

Carla: Well, I think it's a marriage.

Lorin: They go together.

Carla: Yes.

Lorin: So, it's do what you love and the money will follow in some way.

Carla: Right.

Romy: They both need to feed off of each other, because every business is going to be a roller coaster. There are going to be bumps and turns and spins and you just have to be able to get through all of those, and the best way to get through them is if you are passionate about what you are doing. There are the lows of lows and the highs of the highs, but to be able to get through those lows and those bumps, you have to love what you are doing to survive!

Carla: Also, money does naturally play a factor in that you can't have a successful business without minding your money. So, we do have to be aware of it and manage it and handle it to ensure that our business can continue to thrive and grow.

Lorin: I agree with you that money plays an important role in our success. We have to learn how to work with it and to have it work for us. I am going to switch gears just slightly again, to talk about what role spirituality has played in your success thus far. Carla, you started going there when you were talking about "do what you love first and the money follows."

Romy: I'll jump in here. I believe that things happen for a reason and going through very, very challenging pregnancies, it's like "Why did we have to endure all of that? Why couldn't it just have been a joyful, blissful experience?" You know, the whole "glowing" thing? Well, it wasn't that way for Carla or me and maybe there's a reason why we had this happen. There is a reason for it happening, because look what came as a result. I mean, not only do we have beautiful, healthy children, but we have this wonderful product that's helping so many other people! We just have to be aware. Maybe when they are happening we don't understand why, but we know that there's a reason, and you just try to go with it rather than fight it! There are things that are going to come up that we didn't anticipate and you just have to go with it! You have to find creative solutions to problems because there are going to be problems.

Lorin: You say you believe things happened for a reason. I think people who truly believe that principle tend to trust more, therefore they risk more. Is that true about you? Do you tend to trust more?

Romy: No, I think I am actually a little more of a skeptic.

Lorin: Oh, interesting. Okay!

Romy: Well, you know, I think there's some sort of combination there. I try to give people the benefit of the doubt unless they give me reason otherwise. But, I do tend to question things a lot and some people are put off by that, because they feel like I am resisting what they are saying, when it's just that I really am curious and want to know the reason behind this or that.

Carla: I would say if we put one word to it, Romy is "thorough."

Lorin: Oh, good! That's a great way of saying it.

Carla: Really thorough! I, on the other hand, do have that blind faith, and I truly believe in the law of attraction, manifesting your destiny; just envision it, and believe it. Of course, you have to work at it to make it happen! Use the tools that are given to you. I truly believe that we all have the capabilities to make anything happen. I think that's where there is a nice balance. It's taken a little bit to figure out between Romy and I, but we have a very nice balance. She might ask the questions that I wouldn't even thinking of asking because I am just going to jump into it with my eyes shut and say why not? We'll just go for it. Whereas she does the due diligence, I think I tend to say, "Well, let's just go for it. Let's believe in it, and I know it's going to happen."

Lorin: What a beautiful partnership!

Carla: Yes! It's a really nice complement to each other.

Lorin: So, how would you say that your spirituality influences your business, if at all?

Carla: I would say greatly. I mean, just when you asked that question, I immediately thought of one of the big hurdles in this business venture that we had early on. If we didn't have the passion and didn't know with every fiber in our being that this was what we wanted to do, we would have, at that point, said, "Okay, that's it! We give up! Let's call it quits!" Instead, we were like, "You know what? This *is* going to happen. We are going to get through this. How? I don't know. We don't know, but we are gonna to do it!" And it's just that faith, that entrepreneurial spirit saying, "You've got to keep going. You've got to fight for it!" So, I think it plays heavily in what we do.

Lorin: Obviously, both of you have kids, as your pregnancies were what inspired this business, but I am curious about how being a mother has enhanced your business?

Romy: You touched on this earlier, Lorin, but financially I want to do this for my family. I want to be able to provide for my family not only emotionally but financially, and to show my children that it doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman, but when you put your mind to something you can accomplish it! I was taught that as a child and I want my children to learn that lesson loud and clear through my role modeling of it. Actions do speak a lot louder than words. When Mommy goes to work, I want them to know there's a good reason for it, that I am fulfilling my personal goals, and that it does translate into our family benefitting from it.

Lorin: And, Carla, do you want to add to what Romy said?

Carla: I also relate to the role modeling, and it's neat that my husband is an entrepreneur as well. I, of course, want my boys to do whatever they want to do, whatever it will be to fulfill them. At this point, I hope they are able to have this entrepreneur lifestyle, of having their own business, having the flexibility and the freedom and the responsibilities. So I can model to them, show them this is one way it can be done. Mommy and Daddy are doing it and you can, too.

Lorin: If you choose.

Carla: Yes, if you choose.

Lorin: And if you choose, it can be really successful.

Carla: Right!

Lorin: Do your parenting personas enhance your professional persona or are they two separate entities? Do you find that you're a better parent because of your work and vice versa?

Carla: Well, I have found one thing that's been kind of surprising to me. Whether I am interacting with the kids or interacting with my business partners or consultants that I work with, I sometimes get a little nugget of knowledge of, "Oh, this is how I deal with conflict," or "This is how I deal with praise or thanking someone." It can be positive or negative, and it can come through an interaction with my kids or an interaction with somebody I am working with. I find that I can apply it to one or the other.

Lorin: Extremely well said. I think it's really important to be conscious about how you are parenting or what your parenting persona is and how it can actually enhance your professional persona or vice versa. Now, I am curious how your husbands have played a role in your success. What's their role? What would you credit them with?

Romy: I would without hesitation say that without having my spouse support me in this, it would not be possible.

Lorin: How does he support you?

Romy: Well, financially, emotionally, and professionally – I think it's actually all of those areas combined. We made the choice to have me do this for a period of time where I was not taking in a salary, and that meant that he had to be financially supporting us. So, there is that financial component. And emotionally, he is there when I have my rough days at work, he's there to listen to me and support me – maybe give some ideas or feedback, or just be a sounding board for me. Professionally, when I have questions or I need to go find someone else who is an expert in something that's not my strong suit, I may look to him to suggest not only areas for improvement, but who he might suggest I consult with to ask those questions. It might be a late night discussion and, instead of watching TV, we are

having a conversation about PsiBand. So, it's just that he's working *with* me and not against me. I cannot imagine doing this without having that spousal support.

Lorin: So, looking back now, it's been two years since you've started your business. Is the vision you had when you were starting the business and the vision of where you are now the same, or has it changed?

Romy: I would say that it's the same. The core values have remained consistent as we have gone along.

Carla: I agree. The core values we made have remained the same. Things have come up along the way that were unexpected or that we just hadn't really anticipated and so maybe we've done things a little differently than we had originally thought or have gone down a path that we didn't even know that we'd be going down. So, it hasn't been a straight road. It's been a windy road, but the core idea or vision has always remained the same.

Romy: Yeah, it's sort of like I have heard the analogy of charting a course on a sailing trip or something. You need to kind of go with the winds. It's not going to be a direct straight line from point A to point B, but you need to kind of find your way so that you can successfully get to your ultimate destination.

Lorin: Don't fight the process.

Romy: Right.

Lorin: Is there anything that either of you would like to add?

Carla: Yes, I'd like to add that it's interesting that people ask us pretty often, "Oh, do you have a medical background or a background in medicine or homeopathic

medicine?” Neither Romy nor I do. Our backgrounds are in advertising, marketing, and public relations and so they ask, “How did you make this happen?” Well, what we have done is surrounded ourselves with people that have the knowledge we didn’t. We tried to play to our strengths and things that we enjoy. Of course, there are always business things that have to be done, whether you like them or not, but we really try to utilize what each of us is really good at and in areas where we really shine. When there are things that we don’t know about, we find people we enjoy working with that have a shared vision, people who can help us along the way and can grow with us. We don’t let something stop us. If something comes before us and we have no idea how to do it, we say, “Let’s figure out who can help us and let’s get it done!”

Lorin: It sounds like you are not afraid to learn and, at the same time, you are not afraid of *not* being the expert and finding the expert who is.

Carla: Right!

Lorin: That’s great! I do think there’s something that’s really powerful and that’s quickly helped you grow and that is that you both have advertising, PR, and marketing backgrounds. That helps a lot!

Romy: Something else I’d like to talk about is that, from the beginning, we have had a non-profit partnership.

Lorin: Oh, tell me about that!

Romy: The organization is called *fertile HOPE*. It was just acquired by the Lance Armstrong Foundation in July. But, from the get-go, part of our mission was to help people and not only through our products, but through a charitable donation. So, one dollar of every cherry blossom PsiBand that is sold goes to support *fertile*

*HOPE*. And, that's just part of our way of giving back, because Carla, Peter, and I have all been touched by cancer through family members and friends. These days there are probably not very many people who can say that they have not been personally touched by that. Through *fertile HOPE*, we are not only helping cancer patients, but we are helping parents realize their dreams, or women or men realize their dreams of becoming parents. The *fertile HOPE* organization provides hope, resources, and information to cancer patients and survivors whose medical treatments present the risk of infertility. We felt like it was a really good partnership, as it really sits well with our core values.

Lorin: So you're saying it was part of the process of giving, as soon as the company was making or bringing in dollars? That is such an important thing. I love your idea. I think so many people get caught up in the fact that there are so many not-for-profits out there, but you can find a great one that you love and give to that, rather than try to do it yourself.

Romy: Right, and it's proven to be beneficial from a business standpoint as well, in that there have been relationships built outside of the two partnerships that have spun from that core.

Lorin: I am sure there have been!

Carla: A piece of advice I'd like to give is don't think that you don't have enough to give, because when we started out we had nothing to give! We formed this partnership and once we did have something to give, we started giving and as we grew, we were able to give more! Don't just think of it in monetary numbers. Maybe you don't have a lot to give financially in the beginning, but maybe you're giving in some other way.

Romy: Yeah.

Carla: And, as you grow, you can give more and the organization you are donating to will grow because of it; it's just really a win-win.

Lorin: That's great! Well said! There are two things that you both said that were really important. The first was that you were goal setting from day one and you were giving from day one, and the two things go together. I think that so many people set goals about giving in 10 years when their company is at a certain level.

Carla: Right.

Lorin: Whatever that may be...

Carla: Right, but you don't have to wait until you can give away millions and have the building named after you.

Lorin: Exactly.

Carla: Every little bit helps and like I said, there are ways to give back other than money, if you don't have that in the beginning.

Lorin: Excellent! I watch women grow over the course of their business and the one piece that they say to me at the beginning of working with them is that they want more confidence. So, is there any wisdom you'd like to share around that?

Carla: I think having children has helped my confidence.

Lorin: Oh, interesting!

Carla: I feel like I am stronger, more confident, and more willing to set boundaries, because as a mother you have to protect your family and your children and to guide them, and I think that feeds over into the business. Recently, I was working with my professional business coach and there were a few things that I was kind of hesitant about; my confidence was lacking a little bit. And he said, “Well, what are you afraid of?” And I said, “Well, I don’t know.” I really had to look at what I was afraid of and then I realized, “You know what? That’s really not something to be afraid of.” So, I had to say to myself, “Really, get over yourself and just do it!”

Lorin: Because of our confidence challenges, or how we are confident in one area but maybe not as confident in another, I think, as women, we need to let our confidence spill over to new areas, as you expressed so beautifully, Carla. We need to look at what we are feeling really carefully and say, “Wow, I have no reason to have fear here; just do it!” And it’s time that we do more of that. We have to just dive in!

Romy: I agree with all of that, and I would also add that just as we are learning on a daily basis in our business, we are also learning more about ourselves, and just kind of organically our confidence just grows and grows and grows. You begin to see that you *do* have what it takes to be successful, and you build upon that success. You continue to have more successes and maybe you have some failures, but those failures are learning opportunities and the confidence just grows with you.

Lorin: Well said!

Carla: Lorin, I’d also like to add that Romy has done a fabulous job of finding women in business organizations and groups that women can affiliate with. Not only are they incredible resources, but I think being involved with and reading about the business journeys, successes and challenges of other women is a confidence builder as well, because you can create a support group. Even though Romy and I

each have our home offices in different states, we have a support group we can go to and bounce ideas off of, to vent to or ask questions of. Just being supported as women, by women, makes you stronger.

Lorin: Yes, it's critical, I think, that we support each other, to pull each other up to the next highest level. Thank you both for your time. This has been great.

Carla: Yes! Thank you as well!