

Joanna Denton

# Find your people – but choose them well

After suffering two work-related burnouts, Joanna Denton became a business mentor, helping others who are experiencing struggles at work. Each month Joanna will use her expertise to help you with any business-related problems you may be experiencing in these uncertain times.



Dear Joanna

I am a solopreneur running an online marketing business. Business is going ok, but I am finding it really lonely.

There are so many decisions to make, so much stress as I try to scale and grow, and I don't have anyone I can really talk to.

When I mention any business challenges to my parents, they just tell me, "oh, it will all work out", which just annoys me; I'm sad and resentful because my friends just whinge about not being able to go out to the pub during lockdown, and they don't care what is going on in my life; and my peers don't want to help because they are competitors.

I just have no one around who I can share this stuff with.

What can I do?

Nicola



Dear Nicola

Thank you for sharing what is going on. I really do understand how it feels to think you have the weight of the world on your shoulders and no one to share it with.

And it can be really tempting to try to just unload what you are feeling to the nearest person, and then get frustrated and sad when you think they don't want to listen.

Take a deep breath, we got this.

As a business owner, it is so important to find the people who will support you – but you do need to choose those people well. Perhaps your parents, pub going friends and direct competitors are not the right people. Sometimes it is better to accept that, then go out and find those who are.

**What support are you looking for? Who is best equipped to provide this?**

I wonder – what support are you really looking for? In your email, you talked about having "someone to talk to", and I am curious to know more about that. When you can be clear on the support you need, it will be easier to identify who can provide it.

**Here are some first suggestions which may resonate.**

**Create your inner circle for emotional support**

Let's think first about getting emotional support – someone to hold the space for you and just listen. Not

try to fix anything or compete with you over who is more stressed. Just listen.

Who are the one or two people in your life you can really count on? That's your inner circle, and they don't actually need to know anything about business, they just need to have your back.

Remember, no one is telepathic – reach out to them on a one-to-one basis, really ask for the support you need, and have the confidence that they will step up to the plate. Remember any one can miss the mark in giving support if they don't know what is needed.

**Tap into local networks for logistical and practical support**

Perhaps you are looking for logistical, professional or practical support and advice, such as identifying where to find financial or government support?

What are the networks in your area who provide this kind of information? During the pandemic local Chambers of Commerce and networks like Women in Business have come into their own in keeping their members up to speed on what support is available. There are others out there too.

Joining such a network will also open doors to other entrepreneurs and business owners who will be willing to share their experiences.

**Perhaps a business mentor or coach can provide the sounding board you need**

Or perhaps you are looking for a sounding board to talk through business ideas, brainstorm solutions, and work on implementation together, and all this on a longer-term basis?

Have you considered getting a business coach or mentor to work on these things together? Having someone on your side whose job it is to guide you in the development of your business is worth every penny you might pay to have their help.

I hope that this has been helpful. Remember, you don't have to do this alone – just get clear on what you need, and who is the best placed to provide it.



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