

Jerry Colonna: Hey there, Jules. Thanks for coming on the show. Um, before we get started why don't you just take a moment and introduce yourself.

Jules Pieri: Sure. I'm Jules Pieri, co-founder and CEO of The Grommet, and we launch innovative products from small businesses.

Jerry Colonna: And you're a returnee to the Reboot Podcast.

Jules Pieri: Have you ever had somebody come three times?

Jerry Colonna: (laughs).

Jules Pieri: Am I the first?

Jerry Colonna: Um-

Jules Pieri: [crosstalk 00:00:28]? Can I get the hat trick award?

[00:00:30]

Jerry Colonna: Parka Palmer did three times.

Jules Pieri: He di-? Well, yeah. That makes sense.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah, yeah.

Jules Pieri: But I get the amateur hat trick.

Jerry Colonna: Uh, but- but you're here to talk, in part, about your new book, How We Make Stuff Now.

Jules Pieri: Correct.

Jerry Colonna: So first of all, congratulations on that. It, uh, it is a maker opportunity, but it's also a kind of maker's bible. Um-

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: If you guess-

Jules Pieri: That a way to put it.

[00:01:00]

Jerry Colonna: Yeah. So- so tall me a little bit about f-, you know, about the book, but more important, um, to, for this conversation, how do you define a maker?

Jules Pieri: Well in the U.S. 135 million people call themselves makers, um, but that wouldn't be a very broad lens on, with that word... It would mean people who are- are hobbyists, from hobbyists to people who are pursuing creating a product, uh, a business around a product. And frankly, the folks that we deal with are only at that spectrum, end of the spectrum, it may be a side hustle or their full-time endeavor, but they are intending to create a business around a product. So those are the makers I'm addressing in the book.

[00:01:30]

Jerry Colonna: And- and um, I th-, you know, th- the way I understood the book... And I really enjoyed reading the book, in part because I would not define as a maker, and it sorta gave me insight into that, uh, group of entrepreneurs, whom I have come to appreciate and, uh, work with. But- but it really sorta gave me some deep awareness of just the sort of step-by-step how do we do this. How do we go from, hey, I have an idea, to actually how do I, how do I bring this into fruition and make this a part of, uh, the world?

[00:02:00]

Jules Pieri: Yes. Well, it's complex. This are, um, I mean, these a-, these businesses are an- a MBA. You know, like it's a, it's an entire, the full range of business, um, kind of disciplines come to life in these businesses, and frankly, a lot of people start because of their love for the product or the problem they're solving, and that's- that's perfectly natural. Um, but because these are products that have to compete with products from big guys, pretty quickly the- the- the range of business activities has to step up to the quality of the product. Like you- you can't get away with not shipping quickly or having packaging, or not protecting your intellectual property. So- so the lessons, um, sort of hit hard very quickly with these businesses. You- you can't fake it, fake a lot of this.

[00:02:30]

[00:03:00]

Jerry Colonna: And so, you know, I- I think you tell the story of, a- and I forget the name of the product, but it's the egg shaker, where you ca-

Jules Pieri: Right. It's called Negg. I know what you're saying.

[00:03:30]

Jerry Colonna: Negg, yeah, yeah. Tell me, tell me about Negg, and- and, equally important, tell us about the maker behind Negg.

Jules Pieri: So Bonnie Tyler is in Connecticut, and she- she was already an entrepreneur before she created the Negg, which is a, um, a magical, simple device to peel hard-boiled eggs. And started with, um, she's a web designer, and she wanted to bring deviled eggs to a party, got tied up at work, did not have enough time to peel all the eggs. Had to buy a bag of potato chips on the way to the party. Big fail. And she said this is crazy. Commercial egg peelers don't have people peeling eggs. How did they do it?

[00:04:00]

And she figured it out. It's a combination of friction and water and agitation. Miniaturized that into a little device. And she needed to prototype the Negg. And so she signed up. This is one of the cool things in the maker movement.

[00:04:30] There are maker labs all over the place, including in Bonnie's local library. She signed up for a 3-D printing class, and to run for prototyping. Now, Bonnie walks in, and Bonnie is 76-years-old.

Jerry Colonna: Yes.

Jules Pieri: And she sits down to wait for the, uh, instructor, and he walks in and he's 11-years-old. (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: (laughs). Right.

Jules Pieri: So that's my world. That's the maker world. Like Bonnie can do it, and the 11-year-old can do it, and they're meeting across the generations to-

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Jules Pieri: ... pursue something like this.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah. I mean, I loved it. Uh, that's part of the reason why I love that story, and
[00:05:00] wanted you to- to- to, uh, recall Bonnie, because, um, one of the things that I read into it, and you know from- from having been on the show before, that we often talk about entrepreneurs and readership, and we talk about it. But, and I think that part of what we do, part of the mistake that we make is that we have a, still, a relatively narrow definition of what does it mean to be an entrepreneur. And you know, Bonnie's story, um, you know, of walking to the
[00:05:30] library and being advised, if you will, by an 11-year-old, that was her consultant, right, um, is part of the entrepreneurial movement. That maker movement is part of this sort of larger, uh, stream here. And so I find that super fascinating, and um, what it led me to think about was, um, perhaps the
[00:06:00] loneliness of folks who are in that space.

Jules Pieri: Yeah, yeah. Um, starting with sorta the profile thing that you mentioned, um, I do find when I'm- I'm speaking with people about this space, and I can show pictures, they're very inspired, because I'm showing pictures of people who look like, you know, in our case we're living in the U.S., they look like all of America.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: They- they are everybody. They are plumbers. They are teachers. They're
[00:06:30] doctors. At any age, ethnicity. And so they love that. This fresh, right? Because that's not the face of entrepreneurship we see typically-

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: ... in media. Um, so on one hand it's this super happy sort of side of the story. And- and the reality is the average age to start a company is 45. This is just

[00:07:00] generically. And it's actually the m- most successful age. Like it collides with, that- that age collides with success as well. So some of this is refreshing from an age story. Bonnie happens to be, you know, 76, so that was probably unexpected for people when I told, you know, your listeners she was a web designer.

Jerry Colonna: Right, right.

Jules Pieri: Um, but you asked about the loneliness. And it is lonely, because it's still a fairly atypical thing to do. Far more people aspire to do this than actually pull the trigger, right?

Jerry Colonna: Right.

[00:07:30]
Jules Pieri: I mean, um, it's pretty normal for one of these folks to, when they finally get a product to market, um, to have people say to them, "Well, I've thought that," or, "I," you know, "I- I had that problem," or, "I," whatever. They- they almost sort of claim authorship because they thought of the idea. And these makers look at them like- like Mark Zu-, the Mark Zuckerberg character in- in the- the movie about Facebook. Like if you would've invented Facebook you would've invented Facebook.

Jerry Colonna: Right, right.

Jules Pieri: [00:08:00] It takes a lot to bring one of these products to market, and it's, um, typically a massive learning curve, because, at least in our experience, only 10% of these folks have ever even touched the industry, much less that they're in now. Like they're an ER nurse who's suddenly doing, you know, a kitchen gadget, or, you know, a dentist who's creating an adhesive. And they've never done this. They don't even know who to talk to. They- they- they literally don't know anyone yet who can help them.

Jerry Colonna: Right. And- and-

Jules Pieri: So-

Jerry Colonna: [00:08:30] You know, and- and- and I think, I think about, and you know, in some ways we probably perpetuate a bit of this myth, because, um, we- we- we, a vast majority, not all entrepreneurs, but the vast majority of the entrepreneurs that we- we work with on this show are really, um, folks who do fit a particular profile. They're not the lonely inventor. They're not the singular person.

[00:09:00] They're not the ER nurse who has an idea for something that is outside their realm of expertise, or the expected realm of expertise, only to come up with not just the idea, the product idea, but the, but the persistence and the commitment to actually seeing it through, and seeing through all the steps that you sort of so skillfully lay out in the book.

[00:09:30] Um, what, and- and you talk about the fact that they- they- they don't necessarily h- have places to go, and you know, I- I wanna bring your attention back to some things that you wrote about. Um, and I'm gonna read from your book back to you. " So we built a massive community of the very best kind, people from all walks of life, who are curious, smart and looking to support entrepreneurs in innovation. Over time Daily Grommit became The Grommit, and today we're a power, unique market-maker. One of the reasons of our resonance and growth is that our community embraces the age-old human drive to create and invent. Our supporter's and customer's experience The Grommit as a place to see fascinating passions and talents revi-, " or, "realized." Tell me, tell me more about that.

Jules Pieri: Well, I think, um, I know that one of the founding principles of The Grommit was if only people knew about these companies, these people and their products, they would be interested. They would probably be engaged, if only they could hear the second layer of the story behind the product as well. Like what are the values of the company? How did this product get born? And so that was the bet when we started The Grommit. And that proved to be a good bet. It was totally unprovable before we started. How could I say, "Where's," you know, "How many people are in this category of curious and interested?" Um, fast forward today, I would in some ways Kickstarter and Indiegogo have proven this more than we have, because Kickstarter just its 10th anniversary, and there's been \$4.3 billion of investment made in these projects. And those are far more risky than anything The Grommit launches. We're, you know, several steps beyond Kickstarter in de-risking something.

Jerry Colonna: Right, right.

Jules Pieri: Um, but that, there was this pent-up interest that I was betting on Kickstarter, bet on, and it's proven to be a great bet. When, um, everyday I read all the comments from our... We do an- a net promoter score survey day for our customers, and the people write the open-ended comments every- every month. And um, the thing I'm always looking for is kind of the why. Like why are you here?

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: And um, the most consistent thing they say is, um, first of all, the products are unique and innovative. And the second-most likely thing they're going to say is something about the person the product. Like, "I like supporting small businesses," or, "I like companies that produce in the U.S.A. Or like they are connected to the why of these businesses. And that was the part that took a while to form, frankly. It was easy to sort of hook people with a cool product. But to get people to understand, um, the people behind the products and- and articulate that, that- that's been very gratifying to me.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah. And- and, you know, I- I think of my own purchases over time, and- and I think over the, and I'm glad you've brought in Kickstarter and Indiegogo, um, I think over time one o-, over the last 10 years one of the things that I've own, I've experienced is actually it feels a deep connection with the person who designed the product or the person who went on the edge. I mean, recently I bought a pair of jeans from a, uh, a company, um, in the U.K. that had revitalized jeans-making in this formerly, um, in this, in this small town, and, you know, M- Meghan Markle and I wear the same jeans. Well, I actually haven't been able to wear them, but the- the- the point was I was so moved by the story-

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: ... right, um, that I felt a deep resonance and connection. And I think that that's part of what you're talking about here, is that there's, th- that there's an opportunity for a very human connection to Bonnie and her Negg.

Jules Pieri: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes.

Jerry Colonna: Right?

Jules Pieri: Yes.

Jerry Colonna: But you know-

Jules Pieri: In fact, Bonnie specifically, the day we launched her product, and- and you know, she isn't typical, we don't have a lot of entrepreneurs of her age range, we have some, and some of the comments were from people in her age cohort saying, "I can't tell you how meaningful this is to me. You're telling me I can do it too."

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: And, you know, that- that's part of it, that, um, well, statistically 76% of American higher schoolers wa-, say they want to start their own business. And you know, I sort of speculate that, you know, if I just sort of walk down the street here at least one out of three people would have that, you know, that- that ambition, and you, it's hard to fuel the ambition unless you can see it, right? You're not necessarily gonna do it today this minute, but you want the hope. You want the promise that when you're ready do it there are, you know, role models, but also people who will care that you are doing it, that there will be customers or- or peers who can help you. And we try-

Jerry Colonna: Yeah, but I-

Jules Pieri: We make that very real every single day.

Jerry Colonna: Well, and I think you make it real in the book too, because not only do you lay out the paths that, from- from, you know, from the idea to actually execution, distribution, retail sales, like all of the nuts and bolts of it, but it's interlaced with these beautiful little vignettes and stories.
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Jules Pieri: Well, actually-

Jerry Colonna: And aft-

Jules Pieri: ... 3,000 of them, right?

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: Like that was the goal, that was, that was the like why do I nee-, you know, why now? Why- why write this book? Well, first of all, like I haven't seen a book like this. I wouldn't have done it if it existed. I don't like copying or repeating anything.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: [crosstalk 00:14:54]. And then I realized we're sitting on this experience base that we've had the privilege of participating in observing and helping, and it's almost like a public service or a pu-, you know, almost an imperative to like let's get this out of all of our brains and put it in one place. Um, because the reality is these makers, if they're, when they succeed it's usually because they've figured out how to tap community. So it's not just the customer side. That's very important. You won't have a business unless you can tap people's hearts and minds and pocketbooks.
[00:15:00]

[00:15:30] But um, along the path they have to get comfortable with and- and appreciate how much their peers can help, and the people who've been there before. And obviously the book kind of takes them to the head of the class, and- and shortcuts a lot of that quickly, but um, I hope one of the things people take away when they read it is, uh, LinkedIn is my friend. The phone is friend, right? I can be- [inaudible 00:15:51] has a lot to share. Their, say, you know, kind of battles of figuring out manufacturing. It's one of these in particular they love to talk about. It's usually not a competitive asset, because they usually contract their manufacturing anyway, and they-
[00:16:00]

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: ... you know, they've- they've had to like learn the hard way, and they- they like to save somebody else those same steps. So they get super excited sharing that. I'm like, "Go here. Don't go there." You know, "This person can help you."

Jerry Colonna: And so I- I- I- I, that's the, that's one of the pieces that I'm particularly fascinating with, was that- that there's this concomitant built around the- the

[00:16:30] community of peers, not just the community with- with potential consumers and customers like myself, but really this sort of peers and this peer sharing, which as you know, from- from- from the work we do, we're huge fans of encouraging entrepreneurs of all types to connect with their peers to really understand and share the journey. Um, in that process what would you say

[00:17:00] might be, um, some of the characteristics of, the- the personal characteristics, the sh-, the- the- the leadership characteristics of the folks that you've identified as, uh, successful in this way? What do you see?

Jules Pieri: I can ask that, 'cause in March I did, um, I forced myself to do, um, a March Madness bracket of entrepreneurship. Like and I, and I just randomly came up with the 32 starting point of... And- and I did it auth- authentically. Like I really made myself pick, you know? Somebody else sort of put the bracket together.

[00:17:30] Like he kind of made sense of my 32. And um, and the, and the one that won, if- if you kind of cut to the chase, was tenacity.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: That's the- the quality that I decided, you know, and this generic entrepreneurship, not specific to our makers, but it's true for our makers as well, that um, you know, you, yes, you have to be able to make the sale. So salesmanship is important. You have to be super resourceful. You have to be

[00:18:00] able to communicate well, and you have to have a vision. But, you know, you're getting knocked down, and you have to pick yourself up so often, do anything of those things.

[00:18:30] And you can be great at selling, but if you don't have the tenacity behind that that- that gets you to be able to show up and do the sale, it is the most enduring, the most central characteristic that matters with these companies. And- and maybe even more so with these companies, because they aren't able to just show up at Techstars, and you know, get, develop a- an instant community, and- and you know, kind of, um, get affirmed in the way that tho- those kind of entrepreneurs can get, social proof and affirmation they're doing something that's not crazy.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: Once, you- you identified it early, it's a little bit lonelier journey, so that tenacity might- might even be more important in these cases.

Jerry Colonna: Well, and- and typically these- these folks, unless they go on Shark Tank or something, don't actually end up with funding. It's no-

Jules Pieri: That is... Yeah. That's super hard.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

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Jules Pieri: That- that, um, that one's not solved yet. I would say the crowdfunding platforms have taken us part of the way, and it's- it's incredibly different and meaningful that they exist. We started before them, so it was even harder when we started. They basically get you to that first production run. It's like a loan, essentially. And it's a make-or-break differentiator now in- in- in these companies. It- it's really important. What's harder to get is the next level of funding, though. "Okay, now I need to build a business, and I need somebody to believe that this is gonna have the exponential outcomes," which is harder to prove and harder to bet, bank on for these companies.

[00:19:30]

Jerry Colonna: And you know, on, uh, what also occurs to me, and- and you know, oftentimes, because we do so much work with entrepreneurs who are struggling, we don't necessarily talk about some of the benefits of having outside investors. And one of those benefits could be, if they handled themselves right, having a set of consiglieres-

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Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: ... counselors, who can sorta, um, uh, help support that tenacity.

Jules Pieri: Yes.

Jerry Colonna: Um, uh, does that resonate?

Jules Pieri: Yeah, I see, um, this one guy in the book that I mentioned, Adam, who has a- a- a humble little produce called Guardian Bells. It's a bell you hang. Um, traditionally bikers, like motorcyclists hang, um, bells on their bikes as protection. And it- it also, like there's sort of a superstition that it has to be a gift. You can't put your, buy your bell. So he, uh, he knows that was happening, and created a business around it.

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[00:21:00] But he goes to a coffee shop every morning to try to have, basically, his pre-approximation of that. It's a bunch of people who have their own businesses, who get together every morning. So, you know, that's- that's his way of doing it. Um, but like tonight I'm gonna speak with one of our makers. I don't know what he wants, but he said he wanted some advice. And I'm really busy today, and I kind of wanted to say like, "Okay, let's talk next week." And then I thought, "You know what? He probably di-, I don't know what he wants, but he probably doesn't have somebody else. If he's asking me, he doesn't have someone else." Now, I'll take the call. Like we're gonna at 7:00 tonight.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: This must be important to him.

Jerry Colonna: Right, right, right. Well, and I appreciate that you're doing that. I mean, I think it's- it's you leaning into a role that you can play, um, and- and I imagine, you know, if you've, if you've helped 3,000 different makers launch you don't have the time to talk to even 10% of them-
[00:21:30]

Jules Pieri: No.

Jerry Colonna: ... let alone, you know, maybe even 1% of them. But to make the time there, I think, is- is super helpful, and I'm imagining that you can relate, even from your own experience as a CEO.

Jules Pieri: Oh, completely. Yes. And um... Yeah. I wasn't the greatest at that myself, because initially we had just angel investors who don't play that, necessarily that active a role, and you kinda don't want them to. Like 35 of them, I couldn't have handled 35 consiglieres, you know-
[00:22:00]

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: ... in life.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: But I still go back. They're, the ones who were more active, and you know, maybe a little more savvy, um, I still go back to some of these. They told me that we're more sort of the enduring, as a CEO-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: ... you need to-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: ... do something. Like I'm thinking of Chris [Miraboli 00:22:23] told me, "Jules, you're the eyes and ears of the business. And so when we think, you know, of going to this conference or having this meeting with someone you're," you know, "with a vague agenda that you're wasting time, you're probably not." Like take the meeting. Do the thing.
[00:22:30]

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: And- and 'cause I, like every time I get on a plane I resent it. Like I do not wanna get on any plane ever.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: You know, and then I just, I've learned to trust, and I always go back to what Chris told me. Like, no, that's your job.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: It's your job to be open to the world, and you need to be looking around corners. And you can't do that from your office all the time.

Jerry Colonna: Right. Sort-

[00:23:00]

Jules Pieri: Tho- those kind of like really important, forceful or thoughtful lessons are hard, are hard to come by when you don't have investors. He was a, you know, an investor who played that role for me.

Jerry Colonna: Well, and I, you know, what just popped in my head is that perhaps you're stepping even into that role as you do this call with a maker tonight.

Jules Pieri: Maybe. Yeah, maybe.

Jerry Colonna: Becau-, you know, 'cause you- you've, 'cause there may be a bit of information that comes in that can change the experience of The Grommit-

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

[00:23:30]

Jerry Colonna: ... and what's [crosstalk 00:23:27]. And so, you know, maybe just helping them understand what's going on, um, and wh-, and can- can alter the way The Grommit delivers service, and the way it supports makers.

Jules Pieri: And I think the good thing is we have a 100 people, so this is happening all day, every day.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: Like this is the quantity that answers the phone. The ph-, people are on the phone here.

Jerry Colonna: Right, right.

Jules Pieri: That doesn't happen in all businesses, right?

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: Like one of my sons took an internship at, you know, a hot company, software company for some-

[00:24:00]

Jerry Colonna: That shall remain n- nameless. (laughs).

Jules Pieri: Well, he actually really loved it. But he did say, "It's so quiet."

Jerry Colonna: Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jules Pieri: So like the headphones, and the like do the work.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Jules Pieri: It was hard to get to know people because you were afraid to sorta speak too loudly.

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Jules Pieri: You know?

Jerry Colonna: Yeah.

Jules Pieri: And this is the opposite. Like we're on the phone. We're talking. People are visiting, kind of thing.

Jerry Colonna: [00:24:30] Right, right, right. Well, one of, one of the topics that I think that, uh, you know, I often return again and again to is just how we deal with, uh, disappointment and failure. And- and you know, when you couple the loneliness of the, of the sol- solo product entrepreneur, uh, the Bonnies of the world, and you know, I think, I think it was Bonnie's product that Amazon copied. Um-

Jules Pieri: [00:25:00] Yeah. She's... I was just thinking of that, actually, that that's one of the most lonely things, because it's not exactly failure, but it can kill your business-

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: [00:25:30] ... which is practically failure. So in her case... What people don't realize is that on Amazon a quarter of the products are coming straight from Chinese factories as of 2015, and that made a quarter of the products, um, tend to fall in the camp of copycat, or worse, counterfeiters. And that's what Bonnie encountered, dozens of counterfeiters, like whack-a-mole life. And um, she, this is where I, she's a fiercely, um, strong person. She's a- a- a nationally-ranked golfer. Like, you know, she's had a lot of accomplishment in her life.

[00:26:00] Um, this is the one where she f-, this is the area where she does feel lonely and vulnerable, because she's kind of, it's Amazon against her, it's these nefarious players against her. And sorta no one cares. Like there's n-, there's no one answering the phone at Amazon. It's, and customers buy these counterfeit-made products, but literally used her photos, the prop-, the- the-

the- the trade dress, the- the name and the product, and they were inferior, so they fail. And um, people are disappointment and think Negg is a bad product. She... Interesting, though, a twist since the book is she found a sympathetic lawyer, so this is on the go from lonely to-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: ... some- some version of triumph. She was having trouble getting legal counsel. Like pe-, the first lawyer she talked to said, "Well, every action's gonna be, say, \$2,500, and if you have one of these pop up a week, not 10 of them." She found somebody who just felt like sort of the right- righteous, you know, kinda anger over this.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: 'Cause she described it. It's like standing outside your house and watching robbers go in and steal you blind. That's what it's like when these products [inaudible 00:26:45]. This lawyer felt the same, and they just won a class action suit against, um, I think she told me 37 of these counterfeiters.

Jerry Colonna: Wow.

[00:27:00]

Jules Pieri: Um, so they may or may na- not see, you know, the actual proceeds, but the- the victory was very meaningful to- to Bonnie. It's, you know, reduce that loneliness.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative), Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: Felt like [crosstalk 00:27:06].

Jerry Colonna: Well, and- and- and the, her community got extended th- through The Grommit into, uh, uh, an attorney, who was willing to work with her.

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: He's been with her.

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: And- and give her some resources. And we don't know the end of the story, 'cause the story's still unfolding. But- but um, all of the sudden the loneliness is prob-, was probably lightened just a little bit, made more bearable just a little bit.

[00:27:30]

Jules Pieri: Yeah. Another way we do that, uh, is, and trade shows, believe it or not, are still important in this, these industries. There's a national hardware show. There's shows for everything. Toys-

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: ... outdoor ware, um, housewares. And we will, you know, kinda get a whole gang of maker's together. Say 30, 40, even up to 100, and- and t-, and we'll all together with [inaudible 00:28:01] little tables. And- and typically they'd be all alone in a pretty crummy booth back by the ho- hotdog stand. Like they're given very bad space, because they're not a meaningful vendor to... And we- we get prime space in a beautiful booth. We do all the work. They just have to show up, and trade shows are super hard, but these are different, 'cause they're standing next to 30 other people in the same boat. Different products, not competitive, not [crosstalk 00:28:26] at all, chatting for three days.
[00:28:30] Chatting to customers alone is super fun. You know, that doesn't happen, and these, our booth's always one of the most active. So they're not standing in that lonely booth. They're standing in the cool booth. That alone, like it's so simple, right? And at first I resented it, 'cause like, "Trade shows? Are you kidding me? This is... Really? We have to do this?"

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: This- this... Crazy. We're a digital business." But- but we're not. We're a human business, and that's one of the places where those connections are- are really energizing for our makers.

[00:29:00]
Jerry Colonna: Well, you know, I- I- I'm ju-, I'll just jump in here and- and talk about my friend, Jules. You just said something really, really meaningful there. You said, "We're not a digital business. We're a human business." And Jules, you know, yes, this is our third time talking, uh, uh, for the podcast, but that's what always comes through. You know, what you just said wasn't necessarily a business strategy, but it was a vision, and um, I'll make the- the assertion that that comes through, both in the book, but even more in The Grommit.
[00:29:30]

[00:30:00] Um, because you're creating that platform for that community, for the Bonnies of the world to connect with someone else and say, "There's something here that's powerful." You know, and- and these, this part of our entrepreneurial community kinda doesn't get covers in, you know, TechCrunch and Business Insider, and this conference and that conference. They don't, they don't get \$ 100 million of funding to put scooters on the sidewalk, right? But they make a difference.

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: You know? And- and the vast majority of businesses in the United States are these small businesses.

Jules Pieri: Yes.

Jerry Colonna: [00:30:30] And- and you know, it might be a dry cleaner. It might be a pet shop. It might be a local, you know, retailer of some sort. Bu- but- but we don't chronicle those folks.

Jules Pieri: Right.

Jerry Colonna: And- and those folks, um, are not just an economic, uh, part of the economic engine of the United States. They're part of the fabric of what we're about. And so, well, uh, there's a piece in your book. I just wanted to return to that for a moment, and you know, I keep doing, um, uh, the reading from the book.

[00:31:00] And I wanna go towards the end. And you were talking about, in the last part of the book, you were talking about this notion of your personal capacity for te- tenacity, and I was really struck by this last piece of advice that you were sort of giving people, which is, "Part in parcel of taking on the activities I listed is learning to conquer your own fear, and even embrace it. When it's associated with a decision or life change fear is usually an indicated that you're on a growth edge. No one is fearless. But the people who manage to pursue their ambitions learn to recognize the fear and walk into, rather than practice avoidance. I can tell you from experience it does not feel good or comfortable. Far from it. In fact, the worst advice in the world is follow your gut. If it feels right you will make the best decision. My observation is that the right decision often feels terrible, at least physically." Now, can you say more about that?

Jules Pieri: Well, I- I think people do, um, the happiest people are people who have figured this out and can, you know, work through this. And I think one of the things that can kind of a- a gift, or a personal insight, is what is your tell that you're there. Like I do think it's often a physical one. Like in my case it's my stomach. I... It sort of turns. It could even turn to the point of nauseousness. But mostly it's just an unsettled feeling. But some people it- it would be insomnia, or it- it could overeating, or it could sweating, or it could heart rate. Like I think I've found when I s-, when I share my own tell people know what theirs is.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: Like not-

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: And it's, it is a matter of saying to yourself, "Oh, there you are my friend." You know, like consider it your friend, even though you wish it weren't there. But

[00:33:00] this is what are you here for today? There's something. And I'll- I'll s-, I'll pause sometimes when you're feeling that. Sometimes I don't even know why I'm feeling it.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: And I'll pause and say, "Okay, okay. Stop. What is this? What is this? What's bothering you?" You know, "What's interesting here?" And if you can do that it- it's like, you know, you're, then you can take your brain. Like that's your heart. That's your, like that's your gut, your soul or whatever, sort of reacting, right? But then you can invite your brain in to start helping, right? "Okay, now I know what I'm worried about." Or, "Now I know what the challenge is here." And in my case what I like to do is play out, well, what's the worst thing could happen? I'm upset? I'm worried about this thing, or I'm scared? Um, what's the worst thing that could happen? And I play it out. Like the worst possible. And that's where my brain's helping, right?

[00:33:30]

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: Like, "Oh, okay. Well, I could live with that. It's never," you know, "It's never death or destruction."

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jules Pieri: Um, " I can live with that. All right, all right, all right, all right. I can get through this," right? I can deal with the stomach, and the next things after the stomach, because my brain has worked with it, like, uh, wrestled with it.

[00:34:00]

Jerry Colonna: Well, what- what I- I think you just did was define tenacity in a really beautiful, experiential way. It- it's f-, knowing the tell.

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: It's helping you to find that fear. It's identifying the hesitation, and then allowing your- your higher executive function of your brain to come in and- and- and work with the fear, and then be able to move forward anyway.

[00:34:30]

Jules Pieri: Right, right. Like here's an example.

Jerry Colonna: And is-

Jules Pieri: My brother, when I was about to start the business it didn't make sense to anyone. It was too early for the times, and he said like, "What'll you do if it fails?" And like I wasn't, that, you know, I thought about that, and I said, "Well, I'll get a job."

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: Like what's so bad about that, right? It's not like I'll be a pariah, unemployable, you know, standing outside with a sandwich board-

[00:35:00]

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: ... you know, collecting dimes.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: Like, "No. I'll have to, I'll get a job. Okay. I can deal."

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: It won't be fun. I'll be embarrassed.

Jerry Colonna: Right.

Jules Pieri: But-

Jerry Colonna: "But I can deal."

Jules Pieri: Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: Right. And I think, I think that's- that's the subtitle, if you will, of the book. How We Make Stuff Now: I Can Deal.

Jules Pieri: (laughs).

Jerry Colonna: (laughs). I like, I just changed the title.

Jules Pieri: (laughs). I like that.

[00:35:30]

Jerry Colonna: Well, Jules, this- this was just such, it's so much fun to connect with you, and to- to reconnect, and- and I just wanna celebrate the book. And I think, I- I really do think that you did a service to folks, and you did a mitzvah.

Jules Pieri: Oh.

Jerry Colonna: Um, you know, a really good deed here, and- and I really appreciate your tenacity in making this happen. You know, as folks know I've got a book coming out, and it's not easy to put things together, and- and to really put your thoughts together, and the process. And so I wanna recognize that and thank you for that. And thank you for coming again on the show.

[00:36:00]

Jules Pieri: Oh, I was happy to.

Jerry Colonna: No, it's a always a blast.

Jules Pieri: No problem. Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Thank you so much.

Jules Pieri: No problem.