



Sarah Holloway co-founder of Matcha Maiden. Image credit: supplied.

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Matcha Maiden's Sarah Holloway on turning a side hustle into a career and what it's really like working with your fiancé

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This is how you turn a side hustle into a booming business and keep your love life intact.



When you take a leap of career faith, you really need to stick the landing. And the incredibly successful co-founder of green tea empire [Matcha Maiden](#) and [Matcha Mylkbar](#), Sarah Holloway did just that when she left her well-paid, stable position as a lawyer in 2015 to work full-time on the tea company she and fiancé Nic Davidson had been quietly working on as a side hustle.

But taking on the dual challenges of a start-up and navigating living with and working with fiancé Davidson has turned out to be the best decision for this inspiring entrepreneur; Matcha Maiden is booming, boasting over 1000+ stockists and a huge online community of matcha-mad fans.



Sarah Holloway Matcha Maiden co-founder.
Image credit: supplied.

Vogue asked the entrepreneur to share how she made her career leap of faith, what it's really like working with her business and life partner and reaching for your dreams.

You quit your well-paid job as a lawyer for Matcha Maiden, was there any specific moment that gave you the confidence to make that leap of faith? “There certainly was, it was the scariest but also the most exhilarating time. It was the day that we confirmed our first big order from US retail giant, Urban Outfitters. At that time, we were still a very DIY grassroots operation packing the matcha ourselves in a hired commercial kitchen, with shower caps and lab coats on in the wee hours of the morning after our normal jobs—remarkably unglamorous! I had been so taken aback by their interest in our matcha that I didn’t initially respond to their email at all because I thought it had to be some kind of internet scam!”

Holloway adds, “That’s when Matcha Maiden went from a [side project](#) to a ‘proper’ business and I realised my two careers had suddenly become mutually exclusive. I could no longer do both properly, so it was time for a leap of faith and I took it wholeheartedly and haven’t looked back!”

Did you have any doubts when you pivoted from being a lawyer to an entrepreneur?

“Absolutely! Having said that I had to make a leap of faith, it was by no means an easy jump. I’m indecisive at the best of times, so I agonised over the decision and was plagued by doubt and negative self-talk. I nearly talked myself out of it altogether so many times along the way. But, one of my favourite quotes of all time is: “doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will” and while it’s totally natural to experience self-doubt, it’s so important not to let it dictate your decisions. Of all the reasons not to go ahead with a dream, don’t let it be because you didn’t give it a go—most of us surprise ourselves by what we can actually achieve if we just give ourselves the chance to shine.”

Holloway says, “I still doubt myself all the time... The most important thing for me in quietening the self-talk is surrounding myself with the right people who affirm your talents and support your mission. Another quote is: “you are the sum of the five people you spend the most time with,” and I absolutely believe the environment around you is the key to success. Sometimes we need to do a little clean out and re-evaluate our circle, just to make sure you’re surrounded with people who take you higher.”

What are your golden rules for working and living with your co-founder/fiancé, Nic Davidson?

“It’s definitely been an adjustment for us, but after ironing out the kinks I wouldn’t have it any other way. The most important thing we’ve learnt is that boundaries are crucial and clear communication can get you through any situation.”

Holloway says, “We started off enjoying the novelty of spending all day together and working on something we were passionate about, but that led to very blurred lines between work and play. Work permeated every part of our lives to the point where our pillow talk was barcodes, inventory and freight problems. That led us both to burn out pretty quickly and resent not having any “us” time that didn’t involve work. So after about a year, we started to put ‘work free’ zones into our calendar and ‘phone free’ dates into our weekends. We make sure to schedule in date nights and also work separately a lot of the time throughout the week to make sure we are focusing on our departments and not doubling up all the time.”

How important do you think having a co-founder is when starting a business? Would you have started Matcha Maiden alone?

“I wouldn’t have gotten Matcha Maiden past the scribble-on-a-serviette stage without having Nic as a business partner. I have so much admiration for all the business owners out there doing it alone. The self-doubt and rollercoaster of emotions is so much easier to combat when you have someone by your side to talk it out with. Most importantly for us, we both have very different skill sets to bring to the table. It also means you can never get too far into your own rut without having a second opinion or a sounding board to bounce ideas around with. I am so grateful that we started this together and have been able to grow as a business and couple through the process.”



Matcha Maiden co-founders and real life couple Sarah Holloway and Nic Davidson. Image credit: supplied.

What advice would you give to a young entrepreneur starting their business today?

“Done is better than perfect—a year from now you’ll wish you started today. There are so many reasons not to start and so many ways we can talk ourselves out of it, but you’ll never know how great your ideas are until you get them out there... And chat to people who have done it before. All you need is a gentle push to get started and then momentum will take care of the rest.”

Holloway adds, “Don’t waste any energy wishing you were someone else or getting too involved in what they’re doing, there’s a reason you’re different to them and that might just be the reason you become a success. Go get ‘em!”

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