

her story

WITH RUDIE SOMERVILLE

STRONGER ON THE OTHER SIDE

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The mindset shift that happened to me during my maternity leave literally changed my life.

In August 2018, when our daughter was two months old, I found myself brainstorming business ideas for myself - just a 'fun, little business' that I could enjoy and use my creativity on, while being home with my baby. I started by cutting vinyl with a Cricut to make mugs and t-shirts. It didn't take long to see that custom orders weren't for me. I decided that I would try making items that I like, post them for sale and then hope customers would like them as much as I did... and it worked!

It was also during my time on maternity leave, I was suffering with postpartum depression, and I mean - suffering, because I thought I could just 'tough it out'. I told myself this must be normal when you have a newborn and a farming husband who works long days, everyday, and you're sleep deprived. After eight months of crying and not feeling myself, I finally accepted some medical help. Very soon after, I started feeling better and was able to be the mom and wife I wanted to be. Let me just say, if this is resonating with you - please know, you don't have to live like that. There is help out there for you, and the sooner you accept it, the sooner you'll be the person you want to be.

We currently live 'off farm' and it definitely has its challenges. We only live a couple of minutes away, but it's more of a pain than most would realize. My husband, Kyle, has many late nights and early mornings. In order to see each other, I make an effort to go to the farm and spend time there or do things with him, which really helps.

While at home on mat leave, I loved the flexibility to be available for Kyle, and our farm. I gained a new, refreshing perspective on life. Up until this time I had poured my heart into my school board (Office Administrator) job, and although I loved my position, I discovered that being home was the place I needed and wanted to be. The saying 'you only live once' became so real to me.

During my mat leave, collection after collection, my business 'Rudie Jo' continued to grow. I started introducing some new products and it was so fun to curate things that I loved and then see other people love them too.

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I returned to work after my maternity leave and a couple months into juggling both jobs, the pandemic started. The trend to shop local and support small businesses, brought home by the pandemic, ended up being the biggest blessing for my business.

In the summer of 2020 I looked at my husband and said, "I'm dreading going back to school in September". The covid rules and masks etc. seemed so overwhelming to me. He said, "Then don't go!" Ha! Okay but - what? For real?? I talked to my principal and submitted a request for an unpaid leave of absence. It was approved and I was SO grateful to have the ability to stay home and focus on my business full time, while still having my 'real job' in my back pocket. The decision to become a full time entrepreneur did not come easily. I was reminded MANY times that I should just keep my 'good job', that had benefits and a pension. In June 2022, I took a leap and officially resigned from the school board.

Rudie Jo has grown tremendously during the time I've had to focus on it full-time. We ship across Canada and the United States and now carry multiple other brands, including the well known Antique Candle Co. and Blondie Apparel. We are also known for partnering with small business makers to create exclusive items for our shop and it's super special to me to get to add that 'Rudie touch'.

The word 'mercantile' was added to my business name in early 2022. It reflects my love for old fashioned goods, and the appreciation for wisdom and the years of hard work that came before us. I love the idea of a mercantile being a gathering place where goods are traded, and I hope my little corner of the internet reflects that. I care so much about the community I've built.

In 2022, Kyle and I purchased his family's dairy farm and we look forward to our future on the farm. It is a true honor to continue the family legacy and we feel privileged that we can raise our daughter (and hopefully future children, as well), on the farm. We are excited to be moving to the home on the farm (Kyle's childhood home), within the next year. This will mean eating more meals together, a quick walk to the barn for milk, as well as a larger work space for my growing business.

The future of Rudie Jo Mercantile will continue to evolve as we move through life. I see so many possibilities for Rudie Jo and I can't wait to see where my business grows. I look forward to having a larger workspace and warehouse, and I dream of the possibility of a retail space as things evolve and unfold.

I truly believe that everything happens for a reason and things have a way of working out. Embrace the hurdles and lessons as they arise, and let them make you stronger. I hope my story can give you hope and the encouragement you need to do what makes you happy, with joy and fulfillment in your heart.

Kameron Payeur started Kameron Elizabeth Photography, located in Kemptville, ON, in 2020 after discovering her love of exploring the world through the lens. In a short time, Kameron Elizabeth Photography has transitioned from a hobby to a thriving business that has served hundreds of clients. Payeur has a passion for human connection, embracing candidness and the beautiful chaos of life in a way that makes each photo tell a story. With two children of her own, the importance of time is not lost on her and she holds a special place in her heart for working with families.