OCTOBER 25TH 2026

VOL. 20

DEBUT: TRACY'S VERSION

HER STORY

FROM THE ARTS, TO PHOTOGRAPHER, TO SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPER



THE STORY OF US

BECAUSE THE BEST PART OF THIS STORY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE PEOPLE IN IT.

THE FULLY ALIVE ERAS TOUR

From a college art exhibition to 3 businesses, twenty years of photography, entrepreneurship, art, education, and a whole lot of figuring it out along the way. Meet Tracy the owner & founder of Fully Alive Photography & The Fully Alive Agency.

2006–2026

By Tracy Ann Battaglia


THE PROLOGUE
I WAS SUCH A WILD, EXPRESSIVE, FREE & CREATIVE CHILD
FROM THE ARCHIVE
THE DEBUT
THEN THERE WAS PHOTOGRAPHY
RECORD STORY

THE PROLOGUE

I can't remember a time when I wasn't making something. There's a photo of me at maybe three years old drawing this surprisingly perfect little heart—and it just kept going from there.

I drew. I painted. I made things out of clay, mud and sticks. I covered the driveway in chalk and wondered what would happen if I shaved the chalk down and mixed it with glue. I decorated cakes. I designed clothes and dressed myself in whatever combination I thought was fabulous. I sang, danced, played piano (without any training), built things, collected bugs and spent as much time as I could outside getting dirty.

I WAS SUCH A WILD, EXPRESSIVE, FREE & CREATIVE CHILD

My mom never treated creativity or expression like it was something to be ashamed of. I grew up with full freedom of art and expression. When I was around 9 that meant full freedom -like letting me draw & paint a horse and barn mural across my entire bedroom. I was SOOOO proud.

There wasn't really a "right" way to be creative in our house. If I wanted to make something, I made it. I will be forever grateful to my parents for letting me be ME.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Tracy At 3 - with heart
Tracy At 8 - bedroom wall murals
Tracy's Random Art

01













WELCOME TO → STATION 1:

THE ERAS TOUR

I'M PINK CLOUDING FROM THE THRILL OF IT

Follow the story of Fully Alive through 20 years of creativity, growth, challenges, reinvention and the people who made it all meaningful. Explore each era from my very first photographs to the many hometowns, adventures and unexpected turns that brought me here today.









2006

FULLY ALIVE & BREATHING

THE DEBUT

BUT ON A WEDNESDAY IN A CAFE, I WATCHED IT BEGIN AGAIN

Architectural drafting was probably my favorite class I ever took. I loved the technical side of it – the blueprints, the drafting, the precision—**but when it came time to choose a concentration, I had to start thinking less like an art student and more like someone who was eventually going to need to pay her bills.** And architecture looked like moving to a big city and working for a firm.

Graphic design looked like another firm.

Painting & drawing seemed like a dead end because, as far as I could tell, nobody became a famous painter until they died and I wasn't very good anyways!

Ceramics? I was TERRIBLE. No one ever was going to buy my pottery lol.

And interior design? I loved it so much that I took part classes for years. But I quickly discovered that people had their own ideas about what their homes should look like. And budgets. Which severely limited my abilities to make something beautiful. I couldn't just walk into someone's house and execute every marvelous grand idea in my head. Worse, sometimes they wanted something I thought was really ugly. So that was the end of that journey, lol.

I HAD A MARVELOUS TIME BUSINESS. EXPLORING EVERYTHING.

Silk screening. Printmaking. Oils. Acrylics. Ceramics. Woodworking. Graphic design. Art history. Film. Photography. videographic architecture. I even self taught myself music. guitar. drums. bass. piano. singing & songwriting & in my free time I wrote an album.

2

THEN THERE WAS PHOTOGRAPHY.

I started my photography journey in 2003. I told my grandparents, I'm taking a photography class & grandpa promptly handed over his canon & minolta film cameras. *I'm STILL shooting on these cameras in 2024!*

The photography I was creating was documentary. Street photography. photojournalism. Nonprofit events. Fundraisers. (I would go to events with my boyfriend (now husband) who was studying social work, and photograph what was happening for organizations and newspaper stories. I even shot my first fine art collection in 2005 when I lived in Australia that summer.

That work didn't pay me anything. I just thought it was really cool.

By early 2006 friends had started asking me to take pictures for them. Of their lives, their moments, their families. One of the first was my friend Amadea who asked me to photograph her son, Luca. We went to a park. I photographed this little person being himself. Then she hired me again for newborn photos for their daughter and onward as their family grew. I remember realizing that I could actually make money doing something I found genuinely enjoyable.

Somewhere between those two worlds, it clicked.

PHOTOGRAPHY GAVE ME THE ART—BUT IT ALSO GAVE ME PEOPLE. THE PERSONALITIES. THE LIVES. THE STORIES. AND MAYBE MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT GAVE ME INDEPENDENCE.

I would try every kind of photography! I could take photos of ANYTHING! I could set my own prices. I could build an income as I went. I could make something creative without waiting for someone else to give me permission—or a job that someone else directed. I was my OWN creative director and boss.

So when I finally had to choose to complete my senior year, I chose photography & spent that year in the dark room. I'll never forget the smell of the darkroom pre-ventilation lol.

To graduate the art program, I also needed to throw an art show exhibition for my final. So I asked my boss/ owner at the Coffeehouse & Deli if I could host it there.

3

On October 23, 2006, I got the permission to host my first art show... which I called:

"FULLY ALIVE & BREATHING."

The name came from a series of four paintings I had made of trees. *I loved this metaphorical idea that trees could represent humanity & that it could grow into something beautiful, no matter what it's life looked like ANYWHERE.*

- *Somewhere communal and orderly—in an orchard surrounded by other trees,*
- *Somewhere idyllic & easy—beside a lake at sunset,*
- *Somewhere overwhelming & disorganized—like in a forest of giant sequoias fighting for soil & light,*
- *Somewhere difficult and impossible—it could push its way through a crack in a city sidewalk. It could grow somewhere broken. Somewhere it had absolutely no business thriving.*

And somehow, it still grow to give life & breath to the world. Trees aren't ONLY alive themselves but they also LIVE life through photosynthesis.

I felt like humanity could also be fully alive. If they choose to be or someone encouraged them. *That NO matter where you came from or what your story looked like, there was still life there. There was still something worth seeing, documenting and celebrating.*

My faith was a part of that story too—that Jesus (whether an extraordinary man, a prophet, or God incarnate themselves however you believe) the point - the story goes that this human came to show humans life - and not JUST life – life to the fullest. That if we followed the examples of this man's story and followed their teachings, we could also be fully alive & give life to the world through love, kindness, joy, healing & hope. And hence, fully alive was born.

This art show was something I was VERY proud of! The opening was insanely life giving!

I displayed all my art - drawings, paintings, architectural blueprints, photographs, woodworking, ceramics.

AND on opening night I played my own songs from stage.

I also made the mistake of selling the CD's now lots of people have that terrible record lol.





4

RECORD STORY TANGENT

So fine, another story. A few months before this show a friend, Mic, heard me play the songs at a coffeehouse show and asked if I wanted to record them. So I went to his house, sat in his living room with my guitar, a microphone and a very old-school computer, and recorded my album. Most of the songs were literally just me singing and playing guitar on a single track because I never wrote the actual music. It was ALL in my head. Over song I apparently decided I was a full one woman band... and also recorded the drums, bass and electric guitar myself.

ALL FOR YOU – 2006

01 — Love You (Full Band All Tracs)
02 — This Heart Shatters Here
03 — Crazy Beautiful
04 — Get Up And Go There
05 — Summer Sky
06 — Love You (Acoustic Bonus Track)

I loved that I had written the songs I was considerably less excited about hearing myself sing them haha. I couldn't keep tempo (I just kept playing faster and faster with passion and excitement lol) and my voice was young—really high and strained and over tone. I became less and less proud of the recordings themselves. I mostly put them away and forgot about them. My brother & some old friends, however, did not. And NOW those songs have come back to life for me!!!!

That slippery slope began because my friend Sam Dechert decided to play around with one of the songs and see what twenty years of technology could do with it.

Then he sent it to me.
I went down a rabbit hole.

What started as playing with one old recording turned into me learning entirely new programs, pulling apart tracks from twenty-year-old wav files, teaching myself Adobe Audition, recording my voice again at 45 and seeing what these songs could become with twenty more years of technology—and twenty more years of me.

At first I just wanted to clean them up and remaster them. That did not last long. Soon I was rebuilding them, adding instrument tracks, experimenting with different sounds and making entirely new versions.

There are remasters, full-band versions, folk versions, bluegrass/pop versions, AND because apparently I have no ability to leave anything alone, **full EDM versions.**

And suddenly this a track album I had mostly hidden away for twenty years became creative again with 45+ new versions. And I LOVE IT!

Stop over at the Vault record player to hear a sampling! We also mixed some of the songs into the playlist. See if you can spot my songs!

5

Let's wrap this era by going back to that failed Art exhibit "Fully Alive & Breathing". What was a celebration of ALL my forms of art, gave birth to the debut of my first business name:

FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Following this show, I registered the name and officially started my small business. I began taking the time to advertise and secure legitimate paid work. Sometimes for very little money. Sometimes for free because I desperately needed a portfolio. I started laying the groundwork for a business I had absolutely no idea would still exist twenty years later.

Why is Taylor Swift such a part of my life and business? Let's get into it ...

The very next day. October 24, 2006. Taylor Swift released her debut album.

She was beginning her story while I was beginning mine. I didn't know then that I would spend the next twenty years listening and going on a journey beside her. As her work changed, grew and became more sure of itself—so was mine. Every era/every chapter is connected to hers.

Becoming a better photographer.
A better artist.
Building a business.
Expanding what Fully Alive could mean.
Becoming more confident in my own work and more sure of who I am.

So twenty years later, this isn't just an anniversary. It's a return to that first October.

The Art Exhibit
The Name
The Photographs
The Debut

THE CAFE ON A WEDNESDAY
I REMEMBER IT ALL TOO WELL

FROM THE ARCHIVE

THE VAULT



















KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 3:

THE VAULT

The timeline only holds a fraction of what I was making during these years. Head to The Vault to see the bigger collection—paintings, drawings, ceramics, architectural work, graphic design, early photography, my original music on a record and other pieces I made while I was still figuring out what kind of artist I wanted to be. It's all a part of my story.

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 3:

CAPTURE IT

See the camera, film + gear that tell the story of how I've captured the last twenty years – then grab a

FULLY ALIVE & BREATHING

THE DEBUT

BUT ON A WEDNESDAY IN A CAFE, I WATCHED IT BEGIN AGAIN

But I guess to explain how I got there, I have to go back a little. I went to college knowing I wanted to do something creative and having absolutely no idea what that ***something*** was going to be.

I started with an associate's degree in general art and tried everything I could. Painting. drawing, interior design—*which I fell completely in love with & did for several years.*

After graduating community college, I took a break from school to work, make some money and figure out what I actually wanted my life to look like. Eventually, I went back—*this time to Illinois State University in the art program and started experimenting all over again.*

Silk screening. Printmaking. Oils. Acrylics. Ceramics. Woodworking. Graphic design. Art history. film Photography, videography, architecture.. I even self taught myself music... guitar, drums, bass, piano, singing & songwriting & in my free time. I wrote an album...

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THE CAFÉ ON A WEDNESDAY...
I REMEMBER IT ALL TOO WELL.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

First paid clients · Luca + Annalea
CIOP nonprofit rally
Historical Commission
Fully Alive & Breathing Art Opening
Opening night + original music

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 2:
THE VAULT














2007

The wEdding Era's.

My first wedding came from two really good friends of mine from church, Danielle and Josh. They were on a really tight budget, and Danielle asked if I would photograph their wedding. I was incredibly flattered—and also not entirely sure I should say yes. Not only had I never had my own wedding up until this point, I had mostly photographed kids and families, everyday life, street photography & photojournalism. Weddings felt so incredibly commercial to me. People actually planned for the pictures?! They got dressed up. There were schedules and ceremonies and specific moments I was suddenly responsible for capturing. I had absolutely no idea how to photograph a wedding. So obviously, I said yes, lol.

Danielle and Josh bought me my first tripod for that wedding payment. My mom gave me her Canon rebel for graduation (but I had no training in digital photography yet and was still figuring out how to use it.) Film was what I knew, so I photographed their May 2007 wedding mostly on my film camera with some digital.

And for the first time in my career everyone was ready to be photographed. They matched. They looked adorable. They were excited. Nobody was wondering why I had a camera pointed at them. Everyone actually wanted to be in the pictures. And I fell completely in love with it.

And in one day, I suddenly had to learn how to photograph almost every kind of environment.

The beginning of the day was outside, where I could work with trees, nature and beautiful natural light—the things I already understood. Then there was the ceremony: indoors, dark, filled with warm orange tones and completely different from anything I had been used to photographing. Then the reception, where I had to figure out flash photography. It was one wedding, but it felt like ten photography lessons happening at once. I experimented. I had ideas. I learned what worked and what did not.

And somewhere in the middle of all of it, I realized weddings combined so many of the things I already loved about photography.

I still got to document real life as it was happening.
I still got the relationships and the storytelling.
But now I also had beautiful clothes, intentional details, interesting locations, gorgeous light when I could find it—and a whole group of people who were genuinely excited to be photographed.

Danielle & Josh *gave* me my first tripod - but *really* they accidentally gave me *weddings.*

In the middle of this new discovery that I loved weddings...I got married too! Nate and I were married in August 2007.

Looking back, it's a lovely coincidence that the year I fell in love with photographing weddings was also the year I had one of my own.

From there, I started photographing them significantly and twenty years later I've photographed somewhere around 200 weddings!!!!

FROM THE ARCHIVE

FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY
2006-2

FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY
2011-20

FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY
2016-2

FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY
2023+

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

Danielle + Josh's May 2007 wedding -film + digital
Our Wedding (image by Nate Bridges)





06

3

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KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 4:
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AULT

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2009



1

HOW TO BOOTSTRAP A BUSINESS 101

"Bootstrapping is a self-reliant business approach where entrepreneurs build and grow their companies with limited outside funding by utilizing personal resources and operational income."

In 2009, we took a risk. I quit my day job & bootstrapped myself a new life & trademarked the name and got seriously serious!

I had been building Fully Alive Photography on nights, weekends and basically every spare minute I had for about two years. I was still working as the manager of a coffee shop, but something had started to become very obvious: I was good at creating work. I was bringing in more money photographing weddings, kids, families and whatever other projects people would hire me for than I was making at my day job.

The problem was that I was still only giving photography whatever time was left over. And I kept thinking, if I can do this much while working another job, what could happen if I actually gave it everything?

I didn't have investors. I didn't have startup capital or a giant savings account waiting for me. My family didn't even have any money! I just had the belief that if I gave this everything I had, I could make it work. So I bootstrapped it.

I photographed. I got paid. I reinvested it (a new lens, a new body, a new equipment.) I learned. I photographed more. Then I did it again.

One year it was a better camera. The next, a better lens. Film processing. Printing. Equipment. Whatever I thought would help me take the next step.

That year I bought my first Apple computer, started moving much more heavily into digital photography and finally stopped developing film constantly. I had an enormous amount to learn.













2

WHEN NATE MARRIED ME IN 2007

he knew he was marrying an artist. I'm not sure either of us fully understood what that would eventually mean.

Nate and I moved in with my parents in 2008, which gave us just enough financial flexibility for me to leave my stable job but I definitely wasn't sitting on some giant pile of business profits. I wasn't in debt, but I also wasn't really keeping much of what I made—and I wasn't putting huge amounts of money into the business either. There simply wasn't that kind of capital.

Every little bit of extra income went right back in. It wasn't enough to suddenly make the business bigger. It was enough to make it a little better. Then a little better again. I knew pretty early that this was going to be a very slow journey. And hard. But I wanted it.

There is absolutely no version of this story where I get to pretend I did it completely on my own.

My parents gave us place to live with very low low rent just to pay the bills, while I tried to get this thing off the ground. And Nate gave me the security to take the risk. He had the steady corporate job. The predictable paycheck. The health insurance and benefits. I had the tiny photography business I was trying to turn into an actual career.

His stability gave me the freedom to explore what I loved and see how far I could take it. 19 years into our marriage, I understand even more what a gift that was.

My parents gave us somewhere to land. Nate gave me room to take the leap.

And in 2009, I did.







FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Computer
My Parents
Nate

CAPTURE IT

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 3:

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See the cameras, film + gear that tell the story of how I've captured the last twenty years – then grab a Polaroid, capture this event on film, and clip it to the wall.

HOW TO BOOTSTRAP A BUSINESS 101

"Bootstrapping is a self-reliant business approach where entrepreneurs build and grow their companies with limited outside funding by utilizing personal resources and operational income."

In 2009, we took a risk. I quit my day job & bootstrapped myself a new life & trademarked the name and got seriously serious!

I had been building Fully Alive Photography on nights, weekends and basically every spare minute I had for about two years. I was still working as the manager of a coffee shop, but something had started to become very obvious: I was good at creating work. I was bringing in more money photographing weddings, kids, families and whatever other projects people would hire me for than I was making at my day job.

The problem was that I was still only giving photography whatever time was left over. And I kept thinking, if I can do this much while working another job, what could happen if I actually gave it everything?

I didn't have investors. I didn't have startup capital or a giant savings account waiting for me. My family didn't even have any money! I just had the belief that if I gave this everything I had, I could make it work. So I bootstrapped it.

I photographed. I got paid. I reinvested it (a new lens, a new body, a new equipment.) I learned. I photographed more. Then I did it again.

One year it was a better camera. The next, a better lens. Film processing. Printing. Equipment. Whatever I thought would help me take the next step.

That year I bought my first Apple computer, started moving much more heavily into digital photography and finally stopped developing film constantly. I had an enormous amount to learn.

Nate and I moved in with my parents in 2008, which gave us just enough financial flexibility for me to leave my stable job but I definitely wasn't sitting on some giant pile of business profits. I wasn't in debt, but I also wasn't really keeping much of what I made—and I wasn't putting huge amounts of money into the business either. There simply wasn't that kind of capital.

Every little bit of extra income went right back in. It wasn't enough to suddenly make the business bigger. It was enough to make it a little better. Then a little better again. I knew pretty early that this was going to be a very slow journey. And hard. But I wanted it.

There is absolutely no version of this story where I get to pretend I did it completely on my own.

My parents gave us place to live with very low low rent just to pay the bills, while I tried to get this thing off the ground. And Nate gave me the security to take the risk. He had the steady corporate job. The predictable paycheck. The health insurance and benefits. I had the tiny photography business I was trying to turn into an actual career.

WHEN NATE MARRIED ME IN 2007

he knew he was marrying an artist. I'm not sure either of us fully understood what that would eventually mean.

His stability gave me the freedom to explore what I loved and see how far I could take it. 19 years into our marriage, I understand even more what a gift that was.

My parents gave us somewhere to land. Nate gave me room to take the leap.

And in 2009, I did.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Computer
My Parents
Nate

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 3:

CAPTURE IT


wEdding Era's.
2007
FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY | BRANDING
2006-2010
FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY | BRANDING
2011-2015
FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY | BRANDING
2016-2018
SMALL BUSINESS
FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY | BRANDING
2019-2022
FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY | BRANDING
2023+
THE MANY LAYERS OF THE ENTREPRENEUR
THE QUIET BEGINNINGS OF THE FULLY ALIVE AGENCY
FROM THE ARCHIVE
2010
PREGO

THE MANY LAYERS OF THE ENTREPRENEUR

By 2010, I had been full-time for about a year and I was finally making enough money that I could actually pay myself and start putting more money back into the business. We had also saved up enough to move back out near the end of 2009. So we got a small apartment beneath our means so we wouldn't be tight and I could still pour into the business.

I didn't have kids yet. I had all the time in the world, and I didn't waste a second of it. I HUSTLED like no other.

Until this point, Fully Alive had grown almost entirely through me just taking the work I could get, doing a good job, getting referred and slowly buying whatever I could afford next. But now I finally had enough work coming in that I could start actually investing in growth.

So I started trying things & I started rebranding and diving into major growth.

I had built my first website on a site called bluehost from scratch (pre-template days) in 2007 and I was very proud of my early coding accomplishments. but it needed a facelift. So I redid the site again! I worked on my branding constantly. I designed a logo by this point and printed business cards and printed assets. Then I started paying for advertising for the first time and eventually started trying bridal shows! My first bridal show was in Dec 2010 and I got tons of work! I was constantly trying something, changing something, designing something or figuring out what I could do next.

I didn't really know what was going to work, so I just kept trying things and paying attention. And it paid off!

THE QUIET BEGINNINGS OF THE FULLY ALIVE AGENCY

At the same time, as I was growing my photography business something else was starting. Friends and other creatives were noticing that I wasn't just good at photography—**I was pretty good at business.** *(Because you HAVE to be or you fail & die! lol) And t*hey started asking me questions.

How did I start? How was I getting clients? How did I know what to charge? How did I register my business? File my taxes? What was I spending money on? How did I turn something creative into an actual full-time career? what would it take for them to do it for what they loved?

So I started helping them & writing down every question & answer.

And slowly I was putting together everything I had learned from building Fully Alive from basically nothing. This written material is what would someday become my LAUNCH course! I had NO IDEA!!!!

At the time, it was simply a way for me to help other people start and grow their own businesses. I had absolutely no idea that ten years later, in 2020, those ideas would grow into an entirely separate business of their own:

The Fully Alive Agency.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Brand Development Journey


2011
2009
The Fine Art Festival Era
HOW TO BOOTSTRAP A BUSINESS 101
WHEN NATE MARRIED ME IN 2007
Twenty years after that first Australia collection,
TIMELESS
KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 3:
CAPTURE IT
KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 4:
TIMELESS

The Fine Art Festival Era

Fine art had been part of my photography journey before the business became a business.

In 2005, I went to Australia and came home with what I think of as my first real fine-art collection. And I never really stopped after that. I photographed sea life, landscapes, architecture, textures, places I traveled—basically anything I saw that I thought was beautiful or interesting.

By 2011, I already had years of these photographs.

Then I went to Italy.

I had a wide-angle lens I was completely obsessed with, and Italy gave me EVERYTHING I wanted to point it at. Huge architectural spaces. Historic buildings. Details. Color. Texture. The colors were so vibrant, and I loved being able to capture these enormous spaces and structures in a way that actually felt like being there.

I came home with so much work that I started thinking, I wonder if people would actually buy this? So I decided to try fine-art festivals and fairs.

I started participating in the Sugar Creek Fine Art Festival and for several years I sold thousands of dollars worth of prints that I matted and framed BY HAND at each show!

And apparently the summer I worked at a framing shop in high school finally had a purpose.

I LOVED it. It was so much fun, high energy, and just plain cool. lol.

I loved printing the Images, I loved matting and framing everything myself. I loved putting the displays together and watching someone stop in front of one of my photographs and decide they wanted to take it home. I continued doing the festivals until we eventually moved to Tacoma and then Phoenix.

⁂

The festivals ended.
The fine art never did.

⁂

I still travel specifically to create new collections, and I make fine art almost everywhere I go. Even during client shoots, I almost always end up photographing the location without people in it too. I have to take lighting test shots anyway, and apparently I cannot help myself.

⁂

One of my favorite examples came years later, in 2019. I photographed my amazing (still loyal) clients Nicole and Elliot's engagement session at the Grand Canyon, and they decided they wanted a HUGE photograph of the location for their home. So they commissioned me! I went back through the fine-art images I had made while we were there, retouched the final piece and created a 40 x 90-inch metal print for their wall. It is still one of my favorite commissions I've ever created.

Twenty years after that first Australia collection,

I'm still making and selling fine art. There are pieces from France, Hawaii, Arizona and other collections here today.

I just don't haul an entire booth to art festivals anymore. Now it looks more like online shopping galleries for clients, in-home installations and custom commissions. I also love working with interior designers—whether that means helping select, print and hang a finished piece, or simply selling the digital file so they can use it however it works best for the space.

⁂

Fine art can be a giant metal print on a wall, a framed photograph, a series of smaller pieces, a fine-art book, wallpaper, artwork for a Samsung Frame TV, or even a digital image someone prints themselves.

⁂

The way people use the work has changed a lot over twenty years. The part where I see something beautiful and immediately have to photograph it has not.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Australia shots circa 2005
Fine art festival display in 2013
2019 Grand Canyon commission

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 4:

TIMELESS


FROM THE ARCHIVE
TIMELESS
KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 4:
TIMELESS
CAPTURE IT
PREGO
ENTER MOTHERHOOD
Motherhood changed that.
FROM THE ARCHIVE
2012
2010

ENTER MOTHERHOOD

MOTHERHOOD ENTERED MY STORY IN 2012, AND IT DID NOT ENTER QUIETLY. BUT IT ENTERED WITH SUPPORT & THE START OF A TEAM.

Getting to Mateo had already been hard. There had been multiple miscarriages, hormones to help me stay pregnant, and then a pregnancy that felt like everything that could possibly be difficult was difficult.

I had hyperemesis and was incredibly sick for about twenty weeks.

And then he didn't come. Forty weeks came and went. Eventually, at 42 weeks, I ended up having an emergency C-section, and Mateo almost died. He spent about a month in the NICU. It was a lot.

And meanwhile, I owned a photography business with weddings already booked on the calendar. AND I was shooting the whole time I was pregnant! I had approximately 32 weddings, engagements and other shoots in those nine months of pregnancy.

There wasn't maternity leave. There wasn't another photographer waiting to take over Fully Alive for me.

Mateo came home from the NICU on June 1st, literally the day before I had to photograph a wedding on June 2nd. *But they were the BEST clients a girl could ever have! Thank you Coartney & CJ!!!*

Even with the best clients, those next few months were SOOOO hard.

I was still recovering. I was nursing. I had a newborn who had just spent his first month of life in the hospital and didn't know how to sleep. I didn't know how to leave him. I could NOT do the whole cry it out thing. It was destroying my soul.

And somehow, I also had to figure out how to be working the whole time too. With little to 0 sleep and a physically and mentally demanding joy.

This is the part in my career where support became crucial and necessary. Up until now Nate had second shot for me and I had one Intern who learned from me.

But now I NEEDED support.
I couldn't do my job without it.

This became the very first true foundation of building a team, learning to delegate and LET other people truly help me.

My dad was my very first true employee! And I couldn't be more thankful. He started coming to weddings with me for that June 2nd wedding and carrying my gear. He switched out lenses, held my extra gear and handed me things. When I was exhausted or pumping/nursing in bathrooms, he manned the fort and made sure the DJ didn't start anything without me. Lol.

Kayla became my first "nanny", and she would actually bring Mateo to weddings so I could nurse him between parts of the day! She watched him while I edited, and she and my dad both took Mateo on endless stroller rides so I could focus. Years later, I even got to photograph Kayla's wedding!

Before Mateo, I could throw basically every available hour of my life into Fully Alive. I could work late, take whatever job came along and hustle as much as I wanted.

Motherhood changed that.

SUDDENLY MY TIME WASN'T ENTIRELY MINE ANYMORE.

My priorities changed. The way I worked had to change. And for the first time, I really understood that building this business was going to require more than just me working harder.

It was going to take people.
And I have had some really, really good ones!

Even with a terrible pregnancy & lack of sleep I managed to land myself my first publication! My work was featured on the cover of a small local bridal magazine along with a real wedding feature!

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Pregnancy & Mateo's NICU / homecoming
Coartney' & CJ wedding
Dad working weddings with me
Kayla + Mateo
Kayla's wedding
BNB first publication


2011
2013
Fine Art
tival Era
Twenty years after that first Australia collection,
TIMELESS
THE NOMATIC YEAR(s)
In March 2014 Arizona became our forever home.
FROM THE ARCHIVE
Introduction To Time-lapse Photography
By Tracy Ann Battaglia
Manual Photography 101
Desert Botanical Garden
PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM
SEP/OCT/NOV 2017
APR – JUNE 2019
JAN – FEB 2018
TRACY BATTAGLIA
INSTRUCTOR

THE NOMATIC YEAR(s)

ILLINOIS. WASHINGTON. ARIZONA

Staying in one place forever had never really been part of the plan. Nate and I both wanted MORE. More adventure, more travel, more culture. Just to see more, live somewhere different and experience what life looked like outside of Illinois. So when he was offered a six-month position in Tacoma, Washington, we had options!

The job meant Nate would be living in a hotel in downtown Tacoma for six months. I could naturally stay in Illinois and basically raise our one-year-old alone while he was gone... or Mateo and I could move to Washington with him. So we moved into a hotel with a 1 year old... for 6 months. lol.

The only tiny problem was that Fully Alive Photography was still very much an Illinois business. I already had a year of weddings booked. Families. Kids. Sessions. Clients who had hired me months in advance. So for the next few years I would photograph my weddings and try to cram as many family, kid and other sessions as I possibly could into the same weekend before flying back across the country again. lol. Again and Again with a baby... on my lap. Living In friends living rooms, basements, my parents. Mateo & I couch surfed for years.

It was a lot. And everything felt temporary. AND IT WAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE! But, I didn't know where we were going to live long-term, which city I should be building a business in, or where it made sense to put my energy.

Tacoma was a really cool six-month season of our lives. I loved the Pacific Northwest and being near the water, and we spent a lot of our weekends exploring Seattle.

But I was also lonely.

We lived right downtown along the Sound, we knew it was temporary, and I never really found a community there. I didn't build the kind of relationships that had always been such a huge part of my life and my business. Then, while we were still living in Tacoma, Nate was given another choice.
We could stay in Washington.
Or we could do the whole thing again and move to Tempe, Arizona.

That one took us about five seconds. Sunshine. Warmth. Desert. How would I EVER say NO?

And with a three week notice & a weekend trip to look for a home... we packed up our hotel room, flew to Illinois, said final farewells, emptied 1 storage unit, our friends basement (yes they let us store stuff!) 2 cars, us and a baby... and moved to Phoenix!

Mateo was probably the most well-traveled toddler in the world. Between 1-3 years old he had lived in 5 different homes, slept on more couches than I can count, traveled to three countries and 6 states, and spent a ridiculous amount of time on airplanes with me.

He basically grew up in motion right alongside my crazy adventures.

In March 2014 Arizona became our forever home.

BUT THE TRAVEL DIDN'T STOP... AND THE NOMATIC LIFESTYLE STAYED A PART OF MY STORY FOR YEARS.

So we moved across the country with no family, no community and just two friends In the larger city at all! (1 In surprise and one In cave creek- basically 1 hour commute In either direction.) So essentially we were alone, with a almost 2-year-old, and a business In another state. lol.

Needless to say For that first year in Arizona, I was still flying back to Illinois constantly. I had spent years building a client base there, and I couldn't afford to just walk away from it while starting completely over in a city where nobody knew me. So I did both. I built Arizona as hard and as fast as I could while being a mom of a toddler & still flying back to Illinois almost every month.

It took about a year before I had built enough income in Arizona that I no longer HAD to travel back to Illinois constantly, but I also wasn't about to just leave all of those clients hanging.

These were people who had supported me while Fully Alive was still growing. Families I had photographed again and again. Weddings to maternity to newborns to childhood. People whose babies became toddlers, whose kids grew up, whose lives I had been documenting for years.

Ever so slowly I started scaling the trips back & by 2016 they became an annual situation rather than monthly. Especially after my parents moved away from Normal I didn't have the same motivation or place to crash and built In childcare lol.

It slowly became every other year. Now it's more like every 2-4 years, and I build the trip around wherever my clients can meet me but central so many—Peoria, Springfield, Chicago, Rock Island, Moline, sometimes somewhere in between.

And they still show up. Some drive HOURS to meet me in the closest city. *Some have flown all the way to Arizona just so I could photograph their families here.*

I still have clients from those early Illinois years who are doing this with me, and that kind of loyalty is honestly one of the greatest honors of my career.

Illinois wasn't the only place I traveled either. Over the years I've traveled for clients in Florida, Texas, Mexico (multiple weddings), France, California, and other places I'm sure I've forgotten too, and I still make annual trips to California for the client base I've built there.

So Illinois never fully ended, and neither did the travel. It just slowed down & changed. At first I was traveling because I had to keep the business alive. *Now I travel because twenty years of relationships have spread Fully Alive far beyond one city.*

AND IF THE NOMADIC LIFESTYLE WASN'T ENOUGH I WROTE MY FIRST OFFICIAL CLASS.

took all those questions people had been asking me about how I was succeeding as a small business owner & packaged into an actual class with a syllabus and material! "Fully Business" THIS my friends was the first draft of LAUNCH.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Mateo's Nomadic Life: Tacoma, Seattle, Illinois. Canada, South Padre, Texas, Florida, San Diego, LA, Sedona, Phoenix.
Our Hotel, Our Apartment, Our Townhouse
"Fully Business" Class Syllabus


2012
2015
FROM HUSTLE TO HEADLINES
I WORKED MY BUTT OFF!
THEN FRAN FROM PHOENIX BRIDE & GROOM SAID YES!
EVENTUALLY, MY WORK WOULD APPEAR IN MORE THAN 50 PUBLICATIONS.
FROM THE ARCHIVE
BIG REPUTATION
Motherhood changed that.
SUDDENLY MY TIME WASN'T ENTIRELY MINE ANYMORE.
A 90'S
Looking back, 20
was somehow be
of the largest loss
one of the biggest
periods of growt
entire career.
KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 5:
BIG REPUTATION

FROM HUSTLE TO HEADLINES

By 2015, I was trying to build Fully Alive in Arizona while still maintaining the business I had spent years building in Illinois. I was flying all over the country for work, sometimes internationally, photographing somewhere around 13–17 weddings a year, shooting families and kids, doing bridal shows, networking events, styled shoots, magazine projects and honestly just about anything anyone would pay me to photograph.

And sometimes they didn't pay me.

I did a LOT of free work during those years because I was trying to meet people, get into rooms, make connections, build a portfolio in a completely new market and prove that I belonged here. And if somebody wanted to give me $100 to photograph something interesting? There was a very good chance I was going to say yes.

It was completely nuts.

I was traveling constantly. Illinois. Arizona. California. Florida. Destination weddings. Sometimes Nate would come with me and stay with friends or with the kids' dad so I could take the opportunity and work. We were constantly figuring out how to make the logistics work so I could keep saying yes to jobs that might lead somewhere.

All while we had a toddler who DID NOT SLEEP and absolutely no family in Arizona to help us.

Nate was working full-time at a demanding new job, and I was trying to build an entire business in a city where I had almost no history, no established reputation and very few relationships.

I WORKED MY BUTT OFF!

I did bridal shows. I went to mixers. I introduced myself to people. I photographed events. I took jobs that barely paid. I created things for free. I followed up. I emailed. I called. I redesigned my materials. I hauled displays around. I met vendors. I tried to get published. I was basically doing everything I could think of to make Fully Alive visible in Phoenix.

And somewhere in all of that, I started finding my people.

In February 2015, I was hired to photograph an Arizona Weddings mixer, and that's where I met **Nicole McCall.** Nicole eventually worked for Fully Alive for years, assisted me at weddings, planned weddings alongside me, became my partner in crime for events & one of my closest friends.

I photographed her wedding too, because apparently that is what happens to everyone who helps me long enough. lol.

Then at one of the bridal shows, I met Jeanne Birmingham of White Poppy Floral. She came up to my booth, told me she loved it and asked if I wanted to do a styled shoot. Which turns out Is a LOT of free work where you create an entire wedding concept, bring vendors together, photograph it and submit the finished work to magazines. WAIT WHAT? That was a clear creative disaster yes from me! lol.

My friend Melanie Little from church, who owned Brilliant Bridal, provided the dress. Jeanne created the florals. I got very carried away with the styling, brought furniture from my own house, built a whole desert setup and helped design the tablescape.

We photographed part of it at Desert Botanical Garden, and suddenly I had this entire editorial shoot that looked nothing like the everyday client work I had been doing because many of my clients were low end budgets so this shoot was OUT of this world beautiful and life giving! And I LOVED It!!!!

In April, I started sending it to magazines. A lot of people did not answer me.

THEN FRAN FROM PHOENIX BRIDE & GROOM SAID YES!

In the Summer of 2015, she published the shoot In her magazine - the feature was titled "Desert Flower"

Fran Samuel, the Publisher of Phoenix Bride & Groom Magazine was the sweetest woman to walk the earth, and called me back the very next day, asked to see the photographs and decided to give me a chance.

Then she invited me to photograph Phoenix Bride & Groom's Sweet 15 celebration...which put me into a room full of planners, designers, florists, venues and people who would become part of my career for years. This is also the network where I met Risa Kostis. I had no idea that night that she would eventually become one of my longest-running photography clients, a full service Agency client & one of my very best friends.

The network of Phoenix Bride & Groom plugged me in and opened the doors to so many collaborators and friendships that became part of my life here In Arizona. I literally cried when Fran retired In 2018 but I had 4 marvelous years with them.

And less than a year after Fran published that first styled shoot, she asked me to photograph the cover for the Summer of 2016 Issue!

It was heavenly working with Fran and Kristen Butler that day (who also became a long standing client)

That was the beginning of an entirely new part of my career.

After this cover shoot **o**ne publication became another. Then another. Covers. Editorials. Billboards, wall murals, Client features. Paid magazine commissions with Modern Luxury. National publications. International publications. And my latest video work for Cayla Gray was featured in TIMES SQUARE!

EVENTUALLY, MY WORK WOULD APPEAR IN MORE THAN 50 PUBLICATIONS.

But it started here—with a toddler who didn't sleep, no family nearby, a ridiculous travel schedule, bridal-show booths, a lot of unpaid work, a LOT of hustle and ***one woman named Fran who decided to say yes.***

And If all this publication & networking wasn't enough ...

I spent a significant amount of time refining the "Fully Business" class and renamed it "Launch" *SIMPLE TRAINING for SMALL BUSINESSES.* and I started actually teaching It. Over the course of the next few years I taught to around 6 people. Just people I went to church with, or ran Into at the store that were trying to start a business and needed help. I made my first round of slides and dove Into the world of teaching.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Bridal show displays
First styled shoot
Sweet 15 celebration
Photo of Fran
Early Launch Material

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 5:
BIG REPUTATION



13

TIC YEAR(s)

occame our forever home.





Desert Botanical Garden
PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM

Program: The Art of Vegetable Photography

Instructor: Tracy Battaglia

DESCRIPTION:

Vegetables and fruits are part of everyday life, and these natural gifts can be transformed into a work of art. They are full of color, texture and patterns. You will learn the ideal way to capture every detail through photography. Discover how light, angles and details are used to portray the essence of these culinary delights. Instructed by Tracy Battaglia. Limit 12.

STUDENTS SHOULD BRING THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS:

- SLR + Lens(s)
- CF or SD card (Card reader or cord to hook up camera)
- Recommended: Macro Photography Lens + 24 or 50mm Lens

Registration: Register early at learn.dbg.org/. Program sizes are cancelled due to insufficient enrollment.

DESERT BOTANICAL garden

Desert Botanical Garden Adult Education Program Proposal: Summer 2020

INSTRUCTOR NAME: Tracy Ann Battaglia

ADDRESS: 4021 S Butte Ave

CITY: Tempe STATE: Az ZIP: 85282

PHONE: 309-826-2234 EMAIL: hello@fullyalivephotography.com

PROGRAM DETAILS

PROGRAM TITLE: Personality Portrait Photography

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE MAXIMUM CAPACITY: 10

TENTATIVE PROGRAM DATE(S):

TENTATIVE PROGRAM TIME(S): ANYTIME BETWEEN DAYLIGHT HOURS.

PROGRAM DURATION: 2 HOURS

SHORT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (100-300 WORDS)
Description of the program highlighting the goals and content for the training- this would be used to market the program

Learn how to infuse beautiful quality portraits with the personality of your subject. Whether you want to learn how to take professional portraits or simply capture your friends and family living life this class is for you! In Tracy's portrait course you will learn her tricks and tips to capture the personality of your subject while learning professional portrait photography techniques. She covers the best manual settings, composition, flattering angles, and lighting to make stunning beautiful images of your friends and family every time.

Introduction To Time-lapse Photography
By Tracy Ann Battaglia

I.) WHAT IS TIMELAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY

A.) DEFINITION
B.) ORIGINATION

II.) ELEMENTS NEEDED FOR TIMELAPSE

A.) GEAR
B.) CREATIVITY/SUBJECT
C.) DO THE MATH

II.) CREATING YOUR TIMELAPSE

A.) SET UP TRIPOD AND CAMERA
B.) CAMERA SETTINGS
C.) INTERVALOMETER SETTINGS

III.) CREATING COMPILATION & PRESENTATION

A.) SOFTWARE

Manual Photography 101-

The Three Pillars of Photography | Introduction To Aperture, ISO, and Shutter Speed
by Tracy Ann Battaglia
hello@fullyalivephotography.com

2016

THE EDUCATOR
era

FROM THE ARCHIVE

















THE EDUCATOR *era*

ONE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT CAME OUT OF THAT 2015 STYLED SHOOT AT DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN ENDED UP BECOMING SOMETHING I NEVER EXPECTED.

The Garden has an Adult Learning program, and because I had already worked with them through the styled shoot, they reached out and hired me to create the photography they would use to market those programs. So we had fun, we created the scenes: people painting, an instructor teaching, architecture, planting and all of the different experiences they wanted potential students to imagine themselves doing. Those images ended up on the covers and throughout multiple issues of their Adult Learning catalogs and programs, which was such an honor.

And somewhere in the middle of working together, they asked me another question:

"WOULD I EVER WANT TO TEACH PHOTOGRAPHY HERE?"

ABSOLUTELY!

So I wrote my first photography course, Manual Photography 101, and started teaching it at Desert Botanical Garden in the fall of 2016.

The whole goal was to take people who were stuck shooting on auto and help them actually understand their cameras. Aperture. Shutter speed. ISO. Light. Composition. How all of those pieces worked together so they could stop hoping the camera made the right decision and actually start creating the photograph themselves.
And I LOVED teaching it.

I continued teaching there about twice a year, usually once each semester, from 2016 until the programs shut down in 2020.

Over those years, I also taught other photography classes. Portrait photography. The Art Of Fruit & Vegetables, Long Exposure/TimeLapse, Macro photography, where we focused on tiny details in the plant life around the Garden. I even taught a tablescape photography class where we designed cute tablescapes and then learned how to photograph them —what angles worked, how to use the light, how to frame the scene and how to make the whole thing look intentional.

It was such a fun era because photography had already been my career for years, but teaching made me look at it differently. I had to take all of the things I did instinctively and figure out how to explain WHY they worked.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Syllabus From DBG Classes
My Adult Learn Program Badge


FROM HUSTLE TO HEADLINES
I WORKED MY BUTT OFF!
A 90'S TREND
March 30, 2020 is a date I will never forget.
but Fully
Alive
wasn't finished yet
OWNING MY LEADERSHIP ERA
THEN FRAN FROM PHOENIX BRIDE & GROOM SAID YES!
EVENTUALLY, MY WORK WOULD APPEAR IN MORE THAN 30 PUBLICATIONS.
BIG REPUTATION
Looking back, 2020 was somehow both one of the largest losses and one of the biggest periods of growth in my entire career.
IF YOU ARE STANDING IN THIS ROOM, YOU ARE PART OF WHY FULLY ALIVE EXISTS TWENTY YEARS LATER.
THE MANUSCRIPT
AS THE BUSINESS CONTINUED GROWING, SO DID THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE COMING IN AND OUT OF FULLY ALIVE.
I WASN'T JUST A SOLO-ENTREPRENEUR WHO OCCASIONALLY HAD HELP ANYMORE. I HAD BECOME AN EMPLOYER.
2015
03.30
2020
I think this story says a lot about how I've continued to approach building my team over the years.
KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 3:
BIG REPUTATION
KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 4:
THE MANUSCRIPT

I come back stronger than

A 90'S TREND

March 30, 2020 is a date I will never forget.

Arizona issued its stay-at-home order, and within what felt like days, my inbox became a stream of cancellations and postponements. Weddings that had been planned for spring were suddenly impossible. Couples with weddings scheduled for fall were scared and had absolutely no idea what the world was going to look like by then.

In about one week, I lost somewhere between $30,000—$40,000 in booked work. Some couples postponed. Some completely changed their plans. Some moved forward later with tiny outdoor ceremonies, social distancing or elopements. And if someone truly needed to cancel, there was no way in hell I was going to hold onto their money while everybody in the world was struggling. I refunded what needed to be refunded and trusted that somehow we would all figure it out.

It was completely insane. I remember looking at that amount of lost income and realizing just how quickly an entire career could disappear. It was OUT of this world. I know everyone was experiencing a full WTF IS HAPPENING moment. I'll NEVER forget not just my lost income, but what was happening in the entire world.

HOWEVER, instead of shutting me down, losing hope or feeling defeated, I completely lit the world on FIRE. Haha. I remember feeling empowered—like, hey, this levels the playing field. We are ALL starting at the same place.

And I got LIT. Lol.

Less than ten days later, I built and registered an entirely separate business around skills I had already been quietly developing for years through LAUNCH. That story becomes The Fully Alive Agency, and you'll find more about WHY and WHAT happened by April 10th in the next section.

but Fully Alive *wasn't finished yet*

It should have been. I mean, an IN-PERSON service when you can't be WITH people????? Explain.

And social distancing lasted much longer than a few weeks. My SON was home from school for OVER a year.

BUTTTTT almost immediately, my clients started figuring out ways to keep working with me.

Some of the first emails came from clients asking, "Can I send you products? Can you create content at home? Can you photograph something we can still use on social media?"

My friend Karen, who owns Radiant Marketing, was THE first person who kept finding ways to make work happen. She started by commissioning content I could make by myself at home. Flat lays. Motivational content. Me and Nate working out. Drinking water. Enjoying the fresh air. She let me RUN wild with anything she could post to keep her business going.

Then she started having her clients send products directly to me. I would photograph and style them at home, and she could keep marketing for them without anyone needing to be in the same room.

SHE IS BEYOND THIS WORLD.

And I couldn't be more thankful to her and the countless other clients who kept investing in me, however that looked.

That year pushed me much deeper into product photography than ever before. I learned new ways to style products, build scenes, use props and create content without the client physically being there. I had already been styling wedding details and flat lays for years, so suddenly those skills had an entirely new purpose.

This is also the year my third grader launched his career. Haha.

Mateo was home for more than a year, bored and restless, and sometimes I literally needed another person to hold the camera. So he started photographing me. Then he started photographing Nate and me together for client content. Workout campaigns in the backyard. World Kindness Day images. Social content. Whatever weird thing we were creating that week.

Mateo officially became an employee of Fully Alive. He was eight years old, earning money, learning photography and even starting his own 401(k). He has continued working alongside me ever since as a photographer and videographer, and eventually even started offering his own headshots for kids.

2020 should have been the year Fully Alive Photography collapsed - Instead, I literally came back stronger than a 90's trend. IYKYK.

Looking back, 2020 was somehow both one of the largest losses and one of the biggest periods of growth in my entire career.

I WENT FROM APPROXIMATELY 87 SHOOTS THE YEAR BEFORE TO 122 SHOOTS IN 2020. TODAY, I AVERAGE SOMEWHERE AROUND 145–170 PHOTOGRAPHY CLIENTS A YEAR. I'VE NEVER GONE BACKWARDS. IT'S BEEN AN UPWARD CLIMB. THAT GROWTH DID NOT HAPPEN BECAUSE I SOMEHOW FIGURED OUT A MAGICAL PANDEMIC BUSINESS PLAN.

It happened because my clients figured it out with me.They wore masks. We photographed outside. We kept our distance. They mailed me products. They changed weddings into elopements. They postponed instead of disappearing, so I would still have the income—just later. They found safe ways to continue investing in their families, their businesses and their stories.

⁘

And they kept hiring me.

During that year, any day that was quiet, I found a way to invest in more growth for myself and find new ways to help my clients. I finished writing and self-published my first book, A Branding Guide: How to Elevate Your Brand Through Visual Storytelling—a roughly 200-page guide to branding, visual storytelling and planning the imagery behind your content and goals. It was another piece of the business & education work that had been growing quietly alongside photography for years.

IF YOU ARE STANDING IN THIS ROOM, YOU ARE PART OF WHY FULLY ALIVE EXISTS TWENTY YEARS LATER.

Maybe you've been with me from the Prologue. Maybe you hired me once. Maybe you've hired me thirty times. Maybe you trusted me with your wedding, your baby, your family, your business, your brand or some completely crazy idea we dreamed up together.

⁂

Maybe you worked beside me. Carried gear. Watched my child. Photographed with me. Edited with me. Helped me build something I couldn't possibly have built alone. Either way, you invested in me. You trusted an artist with your money, your story and something that mattered to you. And that is what made this possible. I genuinely don't know how to say thank you enough for twenty years of that.

⁂

So before you leave, please add yourself to THE MANUSCRIPT wall. Grab a Post-it. Sign your name. Leave a note, a memory, a drawing—whatever you want to leave behind from this night.

Stop by and see Anna before you leave to be part of THE STORY OF US video series.

Tell me what Fully Alive has meant to you. How it gave you life. What we made together. Tell me what you remember all too well.

⁂

Because this story was never just mine.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

That First Year

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 6:

THE MANUSCRIPT


2020-2023
2023-2025
2026+
2016
THE FULLY ALIVE AGENCY
2020 changed everything.
04.10
2020
THEN I JUMPED OFF THE PROVERBIAL BRANDING CLIFF
SO I DOVE INTO THE DEEP END
AND THEN I HAD ANOTHER DREAM...
LAUNCH
MASTERMIND
THE EDUCATOR era
FROM THE ARCHIVE
ERAS TOUR

THE FULLY ALIVE AGENCY

ON APRIL 10, 2020, LESS THAN TWO WEEKS AFTER ARIZONA SHUT DOWN AND MY PHOTOGRAPHY INCOME BASICALLY FELL OFF A CLIFF, I OFFICIALLY FORMED A SECOND BUSINESS: BUT IT WASN'T A NEW BUSINESS... IT WAS A QUIETLY BUILDING OFFERING ALREADY MADE.

IN **2010,** I HAD STARTED BUILDING A SMALL BUSINESS CLASS ON THE SIDE BECAUSE PEOPLE KEPT ASKING ME ***HOW*** I HAD STARTED FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY.

BY **2015,** THAT LITTLE SIDE PROJECT HAD GROWN INTO A REAL CLASS, AND OVER THE YEARS I HAD TAUGHT IT QUIETLY BY WORD OF MOUTH TO PEOPLE WHO WANTED HELP STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESSES.

IN **2018**, I REALLY UPPED MY GAME! I TOOK EVERYTHING I HAD BEEN TEACHING AND EXPANDED IT INTO A MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE COURSE. I ADDED NEW LESSONS ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, COPYRIGHT, SEARCH ENGINES, SEO, PR, AND ONLINE VISIBILITY. I ALSO CREATED AN ENTIRELY NEW SECTION FOCUSED ON THE DAILY LIFE OF AN ENTREPRENEUR, COVERING WORKFLOWS, STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOAL SETTING, AND BOUNDARIES.

I BUILT OUT SLIDES FOR EVERY LESSON, CREATED STRUCTURED CLASS SCHEDULES, AND EVEN INVESTED IN A BETTER TV SO I COULD AIRPLAY MY PRESENTATIONS.

WHAT STARTED YEARS EARLIER AS SIMPLY ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM OTHER ENTREPRENEURS HAD GROWN INTO A FULL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE, WITH ORGANIZED LESSONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND PRACTICAL TOOLS TO HELP PEOPLE NOT JUST LAUNCH A BUSINESS, BUT ACTUALLY RUN ONE!

2020 changed everything.

PEOPLE WERE LOSING JOBS. BUSINESSES WERE CLOSING. PEOPLE WERE SCARED. EVERYTHING FELT LIKE LOSS, LOSS, LOSS. MY TAGLINE HAD ALWAYS BEEN *FULLY ALIVE FINDING JOY*, AND SUDDENLY "FINDING JOY" FELT LIKE IT NEEDED TO BECOME SOMETHING OF ITS OWN.

I DECIDED THOSE BUSINESS SKILLS I HAD BEEN QUIETLY TEACHING FOR YEARS WERE NO LONGER GOING TO STAY A SIDE HUSTLE. THEY WERE NEEDED. I WANTED TO HELP PEOPLE TAKE WHATEVER THEY KNEW, WHATEVER THEY WERE GOOD AT, WHATEVER SKILL THEY HAD IN THEIR HANDS, AND TURN IT INTO SOMETHING THEY COULD BUILD FOR THEMSELVES.

SO I DOVE INTO THE DEEP END

THE LAUNCH COURSE BECAME THE FOUNDATION.

THEN I REBUILT MY WEBSITES. THEN A CLIENT ASKED ME TO BUILD THEIRS...THEN ANOTHER... THEN ANOTHER. WEBSITE BUILDING DESIGN & REFINEMENT BECAME AN OFFERING.

I WROTE A BRANDING BOOK

I BUILT MORE COURSES. *I OFFERED THE PHOTOGRAPHY 101 CLASS I HAD BEEN TEACHING AT DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN AND TURNED IT INTO SOMETHING PEOPLE COULD LEARN FROM ANYWHERE. I CREATED AN IPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY COURSE AROUND THE SAME IDEAS OF LIGHTING, COMPOSITION AND FRAMING. I BUILT A MICRO-VIDEO COURSE FOR SHORT-FORM FILMING. I TAUGHT PEOPLE HOW TO MAKE CONTENT, SHOOT VIDEO, BUILD REELS AND TELL BETTER BRAND STORIES.*

AND THEN IT KEPT GROWING.

BRAND STRATEGY.
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
BRAND ASSETS.
GRAPHIC DESIGN.
PRINTED MATERIALS.
WEBSITES.
CONSULTING.
BRAND THERAPY
BUSINESS SYSTEMS.
EDUCATION.

BASICALLY, I STARTED HELPING PEOPLE DO ALL THE THINGS I HAD SPENT THE LAST 15 YEARS LEARNING.

AND IT GREW LIKE WILDFIRE!!!!!!

THEN I JUMPED OFF THE PROVERBIAL BRANDING CLIFF

I KEPT RENAMING & RESTRUCTURING

2020-2023 | THE FIRST NAME IN WAS MY TAGLINE "FULLY ALIVE FINDING JOY" IT WAS SIMPLY MY TAGLINE. I JUST WANTED TO GET STARTED AND DIDN'T WANT TO THINK TOO LONG ABOUT THE BRANDING WHILE PEOPLE WERE IN NEED. BUT OBVIOUSLY IT WAS TOO LONG AND DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT I DID. SO I TOSSED IT RIGHT AWAY JUST A FEW MONTHS IN. BY THE END OF 2020 IT BECAME **FINDING JOY CONSULTING.** I KEPT THAT 3 YEARS!

SOME MORE STRUCTURE CHANGED IN 2021

LIKE A CRAZY PERSON, I STARTED *FULLY ALIVE EVENTS* SO NOW I HAD 3 BUSINESSES AND 1 BUSINESS CARD. LOL. *CLEARLY I NEEDED AN UMBRELLA.* SO I CREATED *"FULLY ALIVE CREATIVE"* AS AN UMBRELLA COMPANY... *BUT I WAS STILL NOT HAPPY*. I HAD SPENT YEARS BUILDING A REPUTATION AROUND THE NAME *FULLY ALIVE*, AND PEOPLE HAD NO IDEA *FINDING JOY* WAS CONNECTED TO ME OR THAT SUITE OF FULLY ALIVE BUSINESSES??? SO CLEARLY I NEEDED TO FIGURE THIS OUT. I WAS CONFUSED.

2023 -2024 | I DECIDED THAT THE BUSINESS WOULD JUST TAKE THE NAME **"FULLY ALIVE CREATIVE."** AND THE UMBRELLA NAME WOULD CHANGE... AND IT WOULD BE "THE FULLY ALIVE AGENCY" AND I LIVED THERE UNTIL THIS YEAR.

THE WHOLE TIME I WAS NEVER HAPPY "FULLY ALIVE CREATIVE" JUST CREATED ANOTHER PROBLEM. BECAUSE IT WASN'T JUST CREATIVE. IT WAS CREATIVE + DEVELOPMENT. BRANDING + BUSINESS. DESIGN + STRATEGY. CREATIVE+ CONSULTING. AND NOW EVERYONE THOUGHT IT WAS JUST CREATIVE SERVICES...

I REALIZED THIS WAS GETTING RIDICULOUSLY COMPLICATED. I WASN'T EVEN DOING MANY WEDDINGS ANYMORE. MY PLANNING PARTNER, NICOLE, WAS MOVING TO TUCSON. SO FULLY ALIVE EVENTS NO LONGER NEEDED TO EXIST AS ITS OWN ENTIRE COMPANY. AND FULLY ALIVE CREATIVE STILL DIDN'T EXPLAIN WHAT I DID.

2025 + | *IN 2025/2026 I SIMPLIFIED IT. AGAIN....* FULLY ALIVE EVENTS MOVED UNDER PHOTOGRAPHY & FULLY ALIVE CREATIVE WAS DISSOLVED INTO

"THE FULLY ALIVE AGENCY"

AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF ADDING THINGS, MOVING THINGS, RENAMING THINGS AND APPARENTLY CREATING UNNECESSARY ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS FOR MYSELF, I FINALLY GOT IT DOWN TO 2 BUSINESSES:

FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
THE FULLY ALIVE AGENCY FOR SMALL BUSINESS

THIS BUSINESS WAS SOOOO MUCH HARDER FOR ME TO BRAND AND FIGURE OUT BECAUSE I WAS CROSSING MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES TOGETHER. CREATIVE SERVICES & DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGY. *IF YOU ARE CONFUSED BY THE JOURNEY, SO WAS I. LOL. I'M SORRY!*

BUT I'M NOT ANYMORE, AND I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO PLANS TO CHANGE THE STRUCTURE AGAIN ANYTIME SOON??? (HOPEFULLY....)

AND THEN I HAD ANOTHER DREAM...

BUT I STILL HAD ONE MORE GOAL: I WANTED TO TAKE "LAUNCH"—*THE SMALL BUSINESS CLASS I FIRST STARTED BUILDING BACK IN 2010*—AND TURN IT INTO AN EVERGREEN E-COURSE.

THAT ANYONE COULD TAKE FROM ANYWHERE, WHENEVER THEY WERE READY TO BUILD THEIR OWN THING. I HAD THE IDEA IN 2019 BUT WASN'T SURE HOW TO DO IT. *HOW WOULD I TAKE A CLASS THAT WAS VERY HIGH TOUCH AND CUSTOMIZED TO EACH PERSON'S BUSINESS GOALS AND MAKE IT UNIVERSAL????*

WELL IN 2025 I DECIDED THAT IN TIME FOR MY 20TH ANNIVERSARY I WAS GOING TO JUST FIND A WAY.

SO IT TOOK ABOUT A YEAR OF RESTRUCTURING, REWRITING, ORGANIZING AND FILMING, **BUT IT'S DONE**. TWENTY YEARS AFTER I STARTED FULLY ALIVE PHOTOGRAPHY, AND PEOPLE STARTED ASKING ME HOW I DID IT, IT'S FILMED, EDITED, ORGANIZED AND READY TO UPLOAD TO THE PORTAL!!!!!

LAUNCH (The e-course) is officially launching!

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Fully Alive Agency Brand Development
Launch Assets
Launch Syllabus

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 7:
THE MASTERMIND

OWNING MY LEADERSHIP ERA

I'VE BEEN A SOLO-ENTREPRENEUR FOR 28 YEARS, BUT I'VE ALSO SPENT A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF THAT TIME LEARNING HOW TO WORK WITH, TEACH, MANAGE AND LEAD OTHER PEOPLE. **LOOKING BACK FOR THIS PROJECT,**

I REALIZED I'VE EMPLOYED NO LESS THAN 25 PEOPLE!

SOME FOR ONE PROJECT, SOME FOR A SEASON, AND SOME FOR YEARS. SECOND SHOOTERS, ASSISTANTS, INTERNS, APPRENTICES, CONTRACTORS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY. I'VE HIRED PEOPLE, TRAINED PEOPLE, MENTORED PEOPLE AND EVEN EXCHANGED MY EDUCATION COURSES FOR ASSISTANT WORK WHEN SOMEONE WANTED TO LEARN FROM ME BUT COULDN'T AFFORD THE CLASSES.

I'VE FOUND ALL KINDS OF WAYS TO WORK WITH PEOPLE, BECAUSE I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BENEFIT BOTH OF US.

BUT BUILDING A TEAM WASN'T SOMETHING I DID OVERNIGHT. IT STARTED SLOWLY, WITH PEOPLE HELPING ME HERE AND THERE, AND THEN SUDDENLY GREW INTO A REAL TEAM BECAUSE I GENUINELY NEEDED ONE.

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, I HAD TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GO FROM BEING THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING EVERY SINGLE THING TO DELEGATING AND LEADING THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED MAKE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE.

THAT WAS A WHOLE NEW KIND OF GROWTH FOR ME! AND I'M STILL IN THAT ERA. STILL GROWING. EVOLVING. LEARNING.





IT STARTED WITH A KISS...

It's a funny title but true. My team started when I harassed my husband **Nate** into second shooting a wedding in 2010. So far he was excited about helping with the occasional wedding, a chance to see what I did for days at these weddings. But eventually the glitter wore off & he stayed for the kisses. **So I** absolutely needed an occasional second shooter and a partner in crime at wedding shows so he was my guy. It was a great experience in many ways. It gave us some really fun husband & wife moments - included several destination weddings in Mexico! I'm forever grateful for his support.

Then my team grew in other ways.

Circa 2010 / 2011 ish I was approached by **Mike Orr** was looking for a photography mentorship so I brought him in for a few months.

Then **my dad** became the person carrying gear, changing lenses, watching the timeline and basically keeping me functioning at weddings after I had my son in 2012.

Once we moved to Phoenix, Nate needed to watch Mateo & my Dad was back in Illinois, so I hired second shooters like **Danielle, April & Thomas**, and then specific project - based assistants like my friend **Paul**, who helped in exchange for headshots, and eventually virtual help from my friend **Jess**, who handled bridal leads and bookings, and **Sonya** who helped at bridal shows. And then in 2017 there was **Justin.**



Ode To Justin

I met Justin Hernandez & his husband Chris at a wedding I was photographing in 2016. We were instant friends. Justin was so full of life & joy. He was the kind of person you just wanted to be around. That fall he connected with me about my 6-month photography & entrepreneurship mentorship program, and the launch course... so in January 2017 we officially started working together.

Over the next year, I taught him my style of photography, editing, culling and the Launch course. In return he helped me at weddings, shoots & video projects. It became a true friendship. I loved Justin so much. We stayed in touch long after he stopped working with me, usually checking in with each other every few months.

Justin passed away this June, and I'm incredibly sad that he isn't here for this right.

He was one of the first people outside my family where mentoring someone & having them assist me really started to feel like a three amigos. He even took my first photograph for my first PR feature. I LOVED that photo (printed)

Justin is a big part of this story, and he always will be. I miss you, Justin. May you rest in peace and love.









LOOKING BACK,

I think some of the most meaningful relationships in my business came from those moments when we were simply finding a way to help each other.

BUT UP UNTIL NOW I DIDN'T REALLY NEED A TEAM YET.

THEN 2020 HAPPENED...

My seven-year-old son **Mateo** was the first to start the actual TEAM! he officially started working for me in March 2020 when the world ended and we had the stay-at-home order. He saved me during the early months of COVID by being my only available photographer. And he was MORE than happy to get off school on a computer and learn how to focus, compose and shoot. This eventually developed into him taking his own clients too! He built our a full garage studio for him to take headshots for other kids. Maybe he'll make it a career? Maybe he won't! But either way, he's started a KIDS$, a savings account and knows how to make income in a pinch! He's now 14 and still shoots me when I need it, and even takes the occasional client!

By late 2020, Fully Alive Photography was growing despite the pandemic. The bounce back was INSANE. I had more work than I could handle. I raised my prices and people still kept coming!

I had also just launched an entirely second business, and creative, STILL wedding photography, social content, websites, branding, events and all kinds of things that one human being physically cannot do at the same time. I finally had to admit that I could not keep doing all of it myself. I was so tired.

Over the next few years I started to make a habit of hiring people who needed me just as much as I needed them. And that became a pattern for life. There have been turned upside down, and whenever I've needed help, I've tried to create work that helped them while they helped me.

In August 2020 **Courtney** came into the business, which is one of my favorite full-circle stories in this entire timeline. The was my June 2, 2012 bride. Within a few days after Mateo came home from the NICU, fight years later, COVID cost her her job, and I had more work than I could keep up with, so I hired her virtually for marketing! It's ALWAYS cheesy but she's our relationship. She's still a loyal client, and has gotten to watch her family grow up behind my camera.

Nicole was another friend turned assistant. She lost her job as an event coordinator at a wedding venue when COVID turned the entire events industry upside down. I needed in-person help SO badly for content creating and project management tasks, she needed a job, and I found a way to bring her onto the team. She eventually started as event director for Fully Alive together, but she recently moved to Tucson. But she's an honorary team member for life.

Then there was **Cindy!** She wanted to start her own business after losing her job during the pandemic, but wanted to work for LAUNCH course and in the event to book my LAUNCH course and headshots. But it was outside her budget. So she started working for me in exchange for work, and again, I found a way to bring her onto the team. She eventually started as event director for Fully Alive together, but she recently moved to Tucson. But she's an honorary team member for life.

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She's here today! Love her a lot.

Some employees are my literal family & some became my family

Izzy is the perfect example!

She answered an internship position I posted on LinkedIn 2022 for her program requirements. What started as one internship became a second internship for her digital marketing degree, then years of being my assistant. At some point, neither of us wanted her to leave! She eventually moved into her own full-time career, but she's still on my assistant team when I need her, LIKE TODAY! Helping with paper sheets and projects. She's become so much more than an employee. She's basically my daughter. I love that girl SO much. She's here today working + give her a hug!

And then there's **Candice** - She was genuinely one of the best things that ever happened to me. She applied the job I posted to cater over Izzy's position in 2020. And it was the transition of losing Izzy after she had been incredibly here sweet & the transition of losing Izzy after she had been with me for 3 years! Along the way, I got to help with love her small charity business I started The Related Ones, an official nonprofit organization. I'm even on the board now! Her and I have been on the couple's counselor working with me, but that woman will forever be part of my life. I do believe Candice was sent to me from a disorder because I know you... I have been changed... for... good... I consider her one of my most trusted friends EVER. I would trust her with my life. She is one of my most trusted friends EVER. I would trust her with my life. She is wise and kind and full of life. I can't wait for her to meet her husband and full of life. I can't wait for her to meet her husband and start a family because I know her so very much and respect her more than I can say.

There there is my other daughter... **Linsey**. I've known her since she was nine years old! She's one of my best friend's daughters, who grew up around me and was my mother's helper and watched Mateo when he was little! She's now a bride herself and is now allowing us when she needed an internship for school in 2023, of course I said yes! I knew I needed an internship for school in 2023, of course I said yes! I knew I needed a videographer for school. And she was! And SHE CAME. I gave her the last role Fully Alive immediately. And she was! And SHE CAME. I gave her the last role Fully Alive immediately. And she was! And SHE CAME. I gave her the last role Fully Alive immediately

OWNING MY LEADERSHIP ERA

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In August 2020, **Coartney** came into the business, which is one of my favorite full-circle stories in this entire timeline. She was my June 2, 2012 bride, literally the day after Mateo came home from the NICU. Eight years later, COVID cost her her job, and I had more work than I could keep up with, so I hired her virtually for marketing! I'll ALWAYS cherish her and our relationship. She's still a loyal client, and I've gotten to watch her family grow up behind my camera.

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Then there was **Cindy!** She wanted to start her own business after losing her job during the pandemic, so she wanted to book my LAUNCH course and headshots. But it was outside her budget. So once again, I found a way to make an exchange work. And then she NEVER left. She's still on my extended team, and she's who I call when I NEED help. She always finds a way to make it work for me and support my dreams.
She's here today! GIVE HER A HUG!

AS THE BUSINESS CONTINUED GROWING, SO DID THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE COMING IN AND OUT OF FULLY ALIVE.

In 2021 **Nate Bridges** helped with second shooting, **Savannah** and **Dara** came on as personal assistants through that year & the next. Eventually in 2022 **Izzy** joined the team as an intern turned assistant for life, then **Dallas** through a photography internship, then my friends daughter **Natalie** starting assisting for holiday minis and huge shoots where I needed extra hands. 2023 **Trianna** came into my life as a model-then rescued me from a disaster when an old contract sent a client to the wrong location & we scrambled to set up the pop up studio on the windiest day EVER!!! She came into my life during an absolutely CRAZY busy season and I wasn't sure what to do with an extra team member but figured it out REAL fast. I'm forever grateful. Then **Comfort** joined us by 2024, **Linsey** started her internship in 2025. By 2026 **Shanelle** came on board followed shortly by **Anna**!

Each helping during different seasons and with different needs.

What started as a few people helping with specific things was turning into a business where I was managing payroll, training people on repeat and creating new roles. Thankfully, I put a system in place pretty quickly, creating training manuals so experienced team members could help train the next person! I was constantly learning how to delegate, figure out who would be the best fit for each role, maximize my ROI and, most importantly, figure out what I could actually hand off that would make my workload lighter and benefit the business.

I WASN'T JUST A SOLO-ENTREPRENEUR WHO OCCASIONALLY HAD HELP ANYMORE. I HAD BECOME AN EMPLOYER.

Some employees are my literal family & some became my family

Izzy is the perfect example!
She answered an internship position I posted on Linkedin 2022 for her program requirements. What started as one internship became a second internship for her digital marketing degree, then years of being my assistant. At some point, neither of us wanted her to leave! She eventually moved into her own full-time career, but she's still on my extended team when I need her, (LIKE TODAY) helping with larger shoots and projects. She's become so much more than an assistant. She's basically my daughter. I love that girl SO much. She's here today working - give her a hug!

And then there is **Comfort** - She was genuinely one of the best things that ever happened to me. She applied the job I posted to take over Izzy's position In 2025 And I loved her immediately. She helped me through an incredibly busy season & the transition of losing Izzy after she had been with me for 3 years! Along the way, I got to help HER turn her small charity business (Comfort The Nation) into an official nonprofit organization. I'm even on the board now! She moved to Florida last year so she couldn't continue working with me, but that woman will forever be part of my life *I do believe I have been changed for the better. And because I knew you...I have been changed... for... good.* I consider her one of my most trusted friends EVER. I would trust her with my life. She is wise and kind and full of life. I call her for advice & any other reason I can think of because I will never let her leave my side! I consider her my family because I love her so very much and respect her more than I can say.

Then there is my other daughter... **Linsey.** I've known her since she was nine years old! She's one of my best friends daughters, who grew up around me and was my mothers helped and watched Mateo when he was little. She was was basically a daughter to me already, so when she needed an internship for school In 2025 of course I said YES! I brought her into Fully Alive immediately. And she was AWESOME. I gave her the job because I loved her but then she EARNED that job like NO OTHER. I trained her on my systems, created templates and taught her how I wanted our content managed. Before long, she was literally running our content and social media almost entirely on her own! For nearly a year, she took something that had always been on my shoulders and made it her own. It was AMAZING. She eventually moved into another job this summer but she's still part of my extended team (Like today!) She's shooting headshots!!!!!!! Give her a hug too. I couldn't do this without her!

And now I basically have a little sister... ***Anna*** *(On-yuh) joined the team this summer of 2026. She reached out to me totally randomly (I was not even hiring at the time) but she just moved here and needed a job- and wanted to work with a small business + do something more creative. I didn't really have a job for her... but clearly I can't help but take in strays In need of me. lol. She was so assertive & positive & full of life- I knew she could offer things I had never offered before with her marketing degree and sales experience. But mostly I had an instant gut feeling that she was perfect for me... even if I didn't have a "job" for her.*

Anna Is like my scrappy street cat, she's adorable & tough & smart & creative & assertive with the most can-do attitude! and I can't help but love her like a sister.

We have SO much In common too. We love cats AND dogs, we love Taylor Swift & dressing up cute, harry potter & all things magical. (she even got me hooked on vampire diaries) We love music & creativity & thinking outside the box. We both have a bad case of ADHD (we lose the work phone at least 10 times per shoot) We are perfect for each other. It's like In frozen when we finish each others "sandwiches" we are synced up... If not a little spazzy. We have SO much fun together and I found more than enough work to keep her busy between this show and launch course!

The biggest reason (besides our Instant connection) that I took risk hiring her when I didn't have a job for her, was that she has marketing degree! I'm excited have her dabbling with marketing for our agency & taking on clients too! So If you need marketing.. between my branding skills & her degree- we GOT you! But you'll have to listen to Taylor & 3 tangents while we do It.

LOOKING BACK,

I think some of the most meaningful relationships in my business came from those moments when we were simply finding a way to help each other.

I've noticed that about so many people who have worked here. Sometimes they come for an internship, a job or an opportunity to learn something, and somewhere along the way, we become part of each other's lives.

Some are employees. Some are contractors. Some are interns. Some are family, some become family. And some move on to completely different careers but still show up when I call and say, "HELP!"

Of course, not every hire has worked out. I've made mistakes, hired people who weren't the right fit and learned some difficult lessons about expectations, communication, boundaries and letting people go. I care deeply about the people I bring into my business, and I've had to learn that I can genuinely love someone, appreciate what they brought into my life and still know that a working relationship isn't the right fit.

I've learned something from EVERY person who has worked with me. I think I've developed into a pretty good leader over the years, but it has taken growth to get here. I've learned how to recognize people's strengths, teach them what I know, trust them with real responsibilities and create opportunities that benefit both of us. And I've learned that being a good leader sometimes means making really hard decisions.

I think this story says a lot about how I've continued to approach building my team over the years.

I haven't always hired people because I had a perfectly planned position or a big budget. Sometimes I hired people because I saw an opportunity to help someone, and I knew they could help me too.

I've always been a relational person. I LOVE people. I love getting to know them, what they're good at, what they dream about and how I might be able to help them get there.

And when it comes to hiring, that matters to me just as much as their resume. I want people on my team that I genuinely enjoy being around, people I trust, people who genuinely care about me and my business (not just a paycheck), and people who feel like a good fit. Because we're not just sitting at desks doing separate jobs. We're spending long days together, creating things, problem-solving, traveling, laughing, occasionally panicking and figuring things out as we go. LOL.

I want the relationship to be good for BOTH of us.

Even when my budget was tight, I tried to find creative ways to make that happen.

Sometimes I paid for their time. Sometimes we exchanged education, mentorship or services. Sometimes I created a position around what someone was naturally good at and what I desperately needed help with. And sometimes, I took a chance on someone because I saw something in them, even if I hadn't quite figured out where they would fit yet.

I've always tried to approach building my team with the same heart I've approached building my business.

The people matter to me just as much as the work we're doing together.

But figuring out how to actually MANAGE & LEAD a team? That's been a whole personal adventure.

I'm still learning how to delegate, train people, create roles and figure out what I can realistically hand off to someone else. And that's been particularly challenging because Fully Alive is such a personal, skilled, creative and established business.

I've spent twenty years developing my skills from photography, branding, graphic design, web design, lighting, styling, storytelling, creative direction and business developement and operations. I have a very specific vision for what I create and how I want my clients to experience it.

And trust me, I've TRIED handing pieces of that off!
I've trained people in photography and video, given them full creative freedom and even sent them out to manage their own projects. Let's just say... I learned some lessons. LOL.

Twenty years of experience is not something I can teach someone in a few months or even a year, no matter how wonderful they are or how hard they work.

Could I hire another photographer, designer or creative director with my level of experience? Of course! But that would require a much bigger budget and totally different business model than I currently have. I'm still a micro- business owner, and every dollar I spend hiring someone comes directly out of what I'm earning.

So I've had to become really intentional about what I delegate and whether that investment actually takes work off my plate.

I've learned things that help me keep up my ROI, cut down on confusion and help streamline the process. I've created training manuals, established systems and learned how to recognize what each person is naturally good at faster. Some people come with fashion backgrounds and become incredible at styling. Others have marketing experience and can take on content or social media responsibilities.

Sometimes someone like Linsey becomes so good at a part of the business that I can hand it over almost entirely. And THAT is amazing!

But most of the time, I'm still the photographer, designer, creative director and the person doing the majority of the work. And my team supports that process rather than replacing me.

For example, when I'm photographing, I handle the lighting, camera settings, composition and direction. My assistants can step in and push the shutter when I need to be in the frame because I've already set everything up and shown them what I want. And that Is INVALUABLE to me! It's been such a blessing.

I've developed a program and guides to help teach everyone that works for me short-form video! Because there's one thing I genuinely cannot do, no matter how hard I try: I cannot photograph and creatively film the same moment at the same time! When clients book video, I need someone on set who can capture beautiful footage while I photograph. And having behind-the-scenes video of ME working has become one of the most valuable ways to market my own business. It's a partnership that allows me to keep creating the work I'm known for while having the support I genuinely need.

I haven't learned how to replace myself. Maybe some day I will? Maybe I will not. But I've learned how to recognize where I need help, what I can teach someone else to do well, and where my own experience is still essential.

And I'm STILL figuring out how to balance all of that!

Today my extended team includes Anna, Izzy, Linsey, Nicole, Cindy, Trianna & *Mateo*.

These are MY PEOPLE. The people I call when I need help! Like TODAY! The people who show up for me, pour their time and energy into my business, and support me in ways I can't even begin to explain. I LOVE THEM!

They ALL take care of me so I can take care of my clients. I can count on them to show up, be kind, work hard, and be authentically themselves. They're wonderful, loyal people, and THAT is why they're on my team.

They do SO much for me! They carry gear, load my car, run errands, organize things, shoot the behind-the-scenes video, push the shutter when I need to be in the frame, help me remember what I forgot, hand me water, notice when I haven't eaten and keep me moving when my body is DONE.

They're my second brain, my extra set of hands and sometimes the reason I make it through a 10-hour shoot without passing out. LOL. And when you're in your mid-40s serving more than 200 clients a year between two businesses, that kind of support is EVERYTHING.

Could I do this job without them? Maybe? Do I HAVE to have a team? Probably not technically... BUT would I have nothing but 9-minute-long tripod videos that I need to edit down for social media ...that I never post, be constantly dehydrated, overwhelmed, confused, in literal pain, only to end up in puddle on the floor after every shoot? ABSOLUTELY.

So I would argue that I do NEED them! I'm just a baby and I'm spoiled and having their support and help means the world to me! I still have stress tremors remembering the feeling of being alone to do It ALL. lol.

Over the years, these 25 people have been part of the Fully Alive team in one way or another. Some for a day, some for a season and some for YEARS. They didn't all stay, and it didn't always work out perfectly, but every single one has been part of my journey as a business owner and a leader.

So to everyone who has worked alongside me over the last 20 years, thank you for trusting me, learning with me, growing with me and being part of this crazy adventure.
I LOVE YOU! Thank you for taking care of me, so I can take care of my clients.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Nate
My Dad
Justin
Team Photos

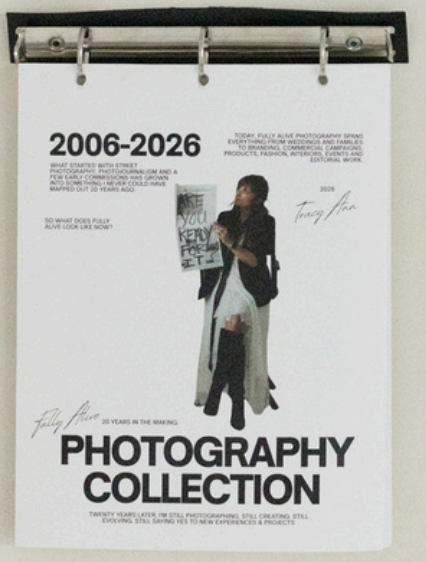
KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 8:
THE ALCHEMY

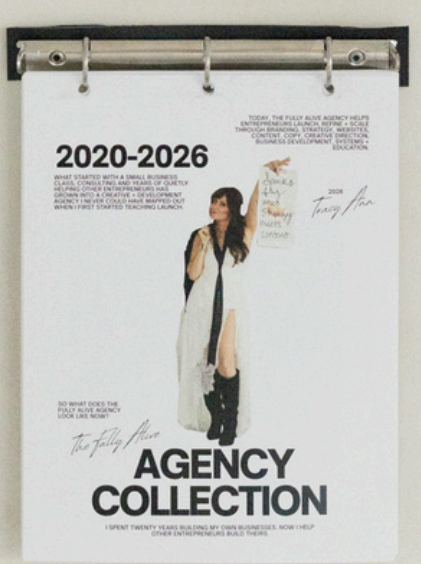

DEBUT: TRACY'S VERSION
HER STORY
THE FULLY ALIVE
ERAS
TOUR
By Tracy Ann Battaglia

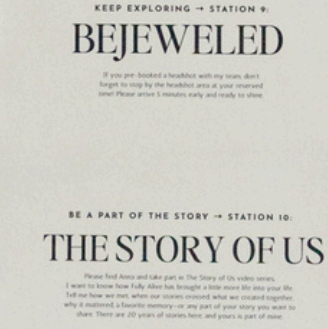

20 YEARS
LATER
I'm pink clouding from the thrill of it.

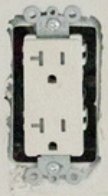

BEJEWELED
THE STORY OF US


LONG
STORY
SHORT...


2006-2026
PHOTOGRAPHY
COLLECTION


2020-2026
AGENCY
COLLECTION


KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 9:
BEJEWELED
BE A PART OF THE STORY → STATION 10:
THE STORY OF US




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OCTOBER 25TH 2026

VOL. 20

DEBUT: TRACY'S VERSION

HER STORY

FROM THE ARTS, TO PHOTOGRAPHER, TO SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPER



THE STORY OF US

BECAUSE THE BEST PART OF THIS STORY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE PEOPLE IN IT.

THE FULLY ALIVE ERAS TOUR

From a college art exhibition to 3 businesses, twenty years of photography, entrepreneurship, art, education, and a whole lot of figuring it out along the way. Meet Tracy the owner & founder of Fully Alive Photography & The Fully Alive Agency.

2006-2026

By Tracy Ann Battaglia

20 YEARS LATER

I'm pink clouding from the thrill of It.



If you had told the twenty-five-year-old version of me, standing in that little coffee shop surrounded by my art, that twenty years later I'd be celebrating an entire career built around creating things, photographing people, building businesses, and helping other entrepreneurs chase their own crazy ideas, I'm not sure how I would have felt.
But here I am...

Twenty years later, Fully Alive Photography has grown from photographing friends and families and random people on the street into a business that gets to create everything from weddings and portraits to commercial campaigns, products, fashion, editorial work, events, and just about anything else I can dream up.

And The Fully Alive Agency? What started with people asking me how I built my photography business has grown into an entire full service creative and business development agency. Today I help entrepreneurs launch, refine, and scale their businesses through operations, branding, design, websites, content, strategy, education, and all the little pieces that make a business actually WORK.

I still get to be an artist. I still get to experiment. I still get to learn entirely new things, change directions, and come up with ideas that are probably a little too ambitious.
And I LOVE it.

SO WHAT DOES FULLY ALIVE LOOK LIKE TODAY?

Well, let me show you! you'll find two collections showcasing everything Fully Alive Photography and The Fully Alive Agency have grown into. Take a look! You might even discover something you had no idea we offered.

But before you go, there are two more things I would LOVE for you to experience.

KEEP EXPLORING → STATION 9:

BEJEWELED

Did you reserve a headshot for today's celebration? Don't forget to visit our Bejeweled Station. Our photography team will be waiting to capture a little something special for you. Be sure to arrive about 5-10 minutes before your reserved time so you're ready when it's your turn. And give us a little patience if they are running behind too. Thanks for being flexible!





BE A PART OF THE STORY → STATION 10:

THE STORY OF US

If you've made it this far, you've just walked through twenty years of my life.

But this story was never really just mine.

It belongs to every person who trusted me with their memories, hired me to photograph something important, invited me into their business, took one of my classes, encouraged me, supported me, or simply showed up along the way.

And I would LOVE to hear your side of the story!

Find Anna at our traveling Story of Us Station! She's collecting little video interviews and memories from the people who have been part of Fully Alive over the years.

Share a favorite memory, a funny story, or what Fully Alive has meant to you. And before you leave pick up your special gift!

LONG STORY SHORT...



I started this story because I believed that no matter where life planted you, there was still beauty to be found, joy to experience, purpose to discover, and a life worth celebrating and a story worth telling.

Twenty years later, SO much has changed. I've grown, evolved, expanded into new industries, and even changed my agency business names far too many times along the way.

Am I an artist? A photographer? A business developer? A branding agency? A designer? A consultant? The answer is YES to all of it! But what I actually do has never changed. No matter what creative outlet, business, or service I'm working through, ***the purpose has always been the same: to help people find beauty, tell stories, experience joy, discover their purpose, and live a life FULLY ALIVE.***

And somewhere along the way, I discovered that the most meaningful things I've ever created weren't just photographs, websites, paintings, or businesses.

They were the relationships, the experiences, the opportunities, and the stories we made together. Thank you for being part of mine.

Fully Alive Photography &
The Fully Alive Agency