

Nancy Boru



Lone Cone Toffee – What is in a name and how did you get started?

It was 21 years ago next month when I finally became more afraid to stay in my 12-year nightmare of a marriage than to take my children and flee. I had \$17 to my name when I made this decision, but I managed to make it all the way across the country. It took me almost a month-and-a-half, but when I drove to the top of Norwood Hill in southwestern Colorado and saw the Lone Cone Mountain looming in the distance, I knew I had found the place where I could assume a new identity and raise my children in safety. It was extremely challenging, but I was able to avail myself of whatever social services existed there. We lived in subsidized housing. We collected welfare. We used food stamps. It was humiliating. But I was so thankful that it was available.

Our town was a small ranching community of only 1500 souls at 7000

feet in San Juan Mountains. After six years of scrambling to support myself and my children, a friend shared with me his grandmother's toffee recipe. I cooked it and found it fabulous. I shared it with my friends and my friends shared their ideas with me on how to turn this into a business.

I have wonderful and very smart friends. One of them designed my logo. Another helped with packaging. Another one helped me cook the toffee, and yet another loaned me \$100 to buy the ingredients and supplies to get me started.

It just seemed a natural thing that I

should call my business Lone Cone Toffee. I had a view of that mountain from my house and somehow seeing it everyday help me heal. I started the business in January of 1996 and in January of 2003, due to the pull of my three granddaughters, I moved to Charlotte. I have cooked, packaged, wrapped and sold over \$250,000 worth of toffee primarily during the Christmas season in the 13 years since Lone Cone Toffee was born.

What has been the biggest moment or key turning point for Lone Cone Toffee's success?

I would have to say that it was joining Tradebank three years ago. It has



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enabled me to buy goods and services at greatly reduced prices. For instance, I was able to get 30,000 new labels completely on trade which made it possible for me to develop two new flavors of toffee this year, Lone Cone Coffee Toffee and Lone Cone Peanut Toffee. might add, I was able to get magnetic ads for my car, printing of my order forms and stationary, advertising and even a new computer all on trade. This has all contributed to me being able to grow my business way beyond what I was able to do before. Not only that, I have sold Lone Cone Toffee

to Tradebank members all over the country, so now my toffee is reaching people who would have never had the opportunity to taste it.

What is your passion behind Lone Cone Toffee?

I simply love to see the expression on the faces of people who taste Lone Cone Toffee for the first time. It never fails to delight me knowing that something I created brings so much pleasure to so many people. I also love it when people who work for me tell me that this is the best job they ever had.

Is there a major hardship that you have endured in your life that has translated into success or a lesson learned in your business? If so, what?

Escaping from my husband and raising two children on my own with next to no money was quite a challenge. Because I didn't want them to grow up to be delinquents, I determined to find a way to make a living from my home instead of driving 45 minutes each way to Telluride to work as many others who live on the Mesa do. For a time, I would get up at four in the morning each week day and bake something fabulous. At coffee break time, I'd go into all the businesses in town with a basket of fresh baked goodies. There was no bakery in town, so people were always delighted to see me coming. I had a little catering business with one friend and a sewing



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business with another. I decorated cakes when someone had a need, hung wall paper for a couple of folks and even painted a couple of houses.

It was important for me to be a good example to my children and not to become what many deem “a typical welfare mother”. I felt that I should do something for the community to pay it back for the social services that I was receiving, so I got myself elected to the Norwood School Board. And the San Miguel Horse Racing Board. And the San Miguel County All Around Board. (They are in charge of the county fairgrounds). And the San Miguel Resource Center Board. (Domestic Abuse). I got a new school built and a park created in Norwood during my 12 years there. Most importantly, my children have all graduated from college and I was able to raise my son to be a wonderful, loving and non-abusive man. I did these things because I had to. It was my choice to run from my husband and my responsibility to do the best for my kids that I was able to do. It makes the challenges of building my own business easy in comparison. There is no obstacle that I face that can compare to what I’ve already conquered. And I know from hard won experience that there is a solution to every problem.

Any advice you can give women about following their passion and becoming an entrepreneur?

Ask for help. So many people feel that asking for help is a sign of weakness. I used to feel that way as well. But then I realized that if I didn’t ask for help, I literally would not survive. I spent close to a month, including Christmas, in a women’s shelter with my children. If that isn’t asking for help, I don’t know what is. I had to beg friends for money in order to make it across the country. Once I got where I was going, I had to ask for help from social services. After I got established and made friends, I asked for their help in launching my business. Every step of the way, I asked for help. And I got it. And I learned an amazing thing along the way: People like being asked for help. They like helping. I have come to believe that asking someone for help is actually a gift to them. Try it.

Who are the best people for you to connect with in business or who are your ideal clients?

The wonderful thing about Lone Cone Toffee is that it is a perfect gift for any occasion. . It comes in a beautiful package and I can send it anywhere for you or deliver a case of it to your office. Everyone who receives it will remember you sweetly. So, anyone who gives gifts is an ideal client. Watch for the Grand opening of Nancy’s new store Lone Cone Toffee and Grancies Bakery in Indian Trail, NC coming soon!**W**

