



STRATEGY

Entrepreneurs Climb Over Huge Obstacles to Success

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Natasha Nelson, Yogurtini, Tempe, Ariz.

With one phone call, two sisters would begin to face the biggest challenge of their lives.

In 2007, Natasha and Chelsey Nelson were living in California and in the early stages of planning a self-serve frozen yogurt shop. But, then the phone rang and they learned their 56-year-old mother had just been diagnosed with a rare form of Parkinson's disease, a degenerative and terminal illness.

"When it hit us, it hit hard, but we already had one foot in the business," said Natasha Nelson. "We knew we had a great idea and our mom was our biggest supporter, but could we all emotionally handle it?" The sisters moved back to Tempe, Ariz., to join their dad in taking care of their mother, and that's when they decided the answer was: "Yes."

"But there were a lot of times we wanted to back out. We were even tossing a coin, at one point," Nelson said.

Then came an especially inspiring moment.

One late morning, while the sisters were doting on their mom, who had lost her speech by now, they noticed her typing emphatically on the computer at her bedside. "Doesn't anybody work around here? Get to work!" their mom wrote, in an effort to cheer her daughters on.

"She made us realize life is going to go on," Nelson said. "You just get up and put one foot in front of the other. It's better than crawling up in a fetal position in my closet, because that would have been my other option."

Today, Yogurtini is profitable and the sisters are turning it into a national franchise. They already have four commitments.

"We're ecstatic that we've done something our mom can be proud of," said Nelson. "The sky's the limit at this point."