

*Transcript*

**Episode title:** Building A Travel Empire in Mexico with Claire B. Soares

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Claire Soares (00:00:00)

I was speaking with someone else. And they were saying to me that those of us who actually live abroad like you've like crossed this different threshold, that you're a very unique person because of the risk that your family feels that you potentially feels and all the battles of you, leaving the US to come somewhere else that everyone's looking at you crazy and you may not get a lot of support. But the fact that you're thriving probably means that you have a very strong sense of self and a strong confidence.

Christine Job (00:00:28)

Hey, everyone, welcome back to Flourish In The Foreign. The podcast that celebrates elevates and affirms the voices and stories of Black women living and thriving abroad, while also exploring living abroad as a pathway to wellness. I'm your host Christine Job, a Black American woman, currently based in Spain, I am not only a podcaster but I'm also a business strategist that helps Black women and women of color, leverage their talents and their expertise into viable and sustainable online businesses, businesses that make them professionally fulfilled, as well as financially abundant while they pursue thriving lives abroad. If you are ready to take your dream seriously and your business seriously and launch that business or scale it to a full time business, definitely get in touch you can learn more about me and my business at [www.christinejob.com](http://www.christinejob.com), that is [christinejob.com](http://christinejob.com). And if you have not already grabbed my Build A Business Abroad Guide, definitely grab that today. The link to that is in the description of this episode and can also find it on the Flourish In The Foreign website. So y'all know that Flourish In The Foreign is a labor of love, but labor none the less. And y'all this labor has paid off Flourish In The Foreign has been shortlisted for the International Women's Podcasts Awards. What!! I know! Aren't you guys excited I was very, very thrilled when I got that news. The podcast has been shortlisted for the International Women's Podcast Awards in the Moment of Touching Honesty category and the awards will be given out in the winners will be announced on Thursday, September 23rd in London. I probably won't be able to make it to London because of you know, pandemic. But how amazing I feel really, really honoured to be shortlisted. And I just feel like I do it for all y'all. And I just feel very proud on behalf of the podcast. So thank you guys for showing love and your continued support is so important. It creates these kinds of moments right now. If you're looking to support this podcast that has been shortlisted for the International Women's Podcast Awards, you can become a Patreon at [patreon.com/flourishforeign](http://patreon.com/flourishforeign) you can tip the podcast via cash app at \$flourishforeign. You can buy me a coffee at [buymeacoffee.com/flourishforeign](http://buymeacoffee.com/flourishforeign) and you can purchase a piece of sorely needed production equipment via the Amazon Wishlist which you can find on the website [flourishintheforeign.com/support](http://flourishintheforeign.com/support). And as always write a review, it helps give the podcast a five star rating. Share the podcast with everyone that you know on LinkedIn and everywhere. And continue to shout out Flourish In The Foreign to your favorite blogs and vlogs and other podcasters and Oprah! Just go ahead and supply the podcast to Oprah, if you get a chance. So thank you all again, so much for your love and support. Because this is not just me, this is us. So yeah, we did it. We are shortlisted for this award. And I'm so so thrilled. So I kind of forgot to celebrate the one year anniversary of Flourish In The Foreign

which happened in May. And so I'm thinking about ways to celebrate that. And in the meantime, while I think of a really cool and clever way to celebrate the anniversary, I want to just extend my greatest thank you to be on audience.... you guys who listen and share every single week. You guys are so amazing. And I want to do something special for you. I currently have a one on one moving abroad with intention, strategy kind of power hour that I offer for 100 euros. So I decided to celebrate the one year anniversary of Flourish In The Foreign. I'm going to give a 50% off discount to everyone who books a session with me. Now, this is a stipulation, I am probably going to phase out this service by the end of the year, I only have a limited amount of time that I actually do these one on ones. And so you need to definitely book that if you if you're interested, wait to the end, I'm gonna give you the discount codes away to the end. And also all of these sessions that you book have to be completed by the end of the year. So if you have been like I want to talk to you, Christine, now's the opportunity to go ahead and do so basically, you can book two sessions for the price of one regular one. So thank you all so so much. All right, on to the next episode.

Today's episode is with Claire. And I really enjoyed this interview because Claire's story, I think, is so incredibly relatable. Claire was a corporate woman, you know, killing it, kicking butt taking names and going up the corporate ladder. But she truly ran into a glass ceiling. And how she decided to pivot from that experience, I think is so incredibly inspiring. And it is truly what I mean when I say leverage your own talents and your expertise into a viable business for yourself, because that's what she did. And it is so very successful in she is so incredible. But I'm gonna let her tell you all about it.

Claire Soares (00:07:15)

My name is Claire Soares, and I am from Woodbridge, Virginia. I live currently in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico, and I am 43 years old. I left the US two years ago in 2018 in May, and haven't looked back, so I had an amazing childhood. My mom and my dad took me to Virginia Beach a lot. So we took the one big family vacation and it was amazing. And then I'm not sure I don't remember what made me want to travel. But I know that I always wanted to even when I can think back in college, I was always the person that organized little road trips, I went to Pitt, and we took road trips to Penn State,

Christine Job (00:07:54)

I asked Claire to tell me about her university experience. And if she had the opportunity to study abroad,

Claire Soares (00:08:02)

I always wanted to study abroad, but I couldn't get anyone to do with me. So I shied away from doing it. I started my undergrad at University of Pittsburgh and I was pre law. And then I ended up switching from pre law to computer science. And I finished my degree, my last four years at George Mason. And what's interesting is that it actually took me 10 years to graduate from College. So I actually like to share that a lot. Because I think people look at your success. And they're like, oh, like they had an easy like it actually took me 10 years to graduate because I really did not want to go to college. I wanted to be an actress, and a singer. But I was raised that I needed to go to school. And so my last like six years in school, I pretty much went part time or not at all because I ran out of money. And then by the time I graduated, I almost didn't graduate, because I thought I was flunking out my artificial

intelligence class where I had to teach a computer How To Play Chess. And I remember my boyfriend at the time was like you need to go talk to your teacher before you quit. And when I that I wasn't really getting the best grades, but everything was on a curve back then. And so I actually finished that class with a B. So while I was going to school, what's interesting is I was working part-time as a bartender, still, to this day, my favorite job ever because I got to meet so many amazing people and just use my gift of gab. And while I was in school, at some point, I felt a little uncomfortable. And I became very much involved in some of my religious pursuits. And so I quit my job bartending to make like a quarter of what I was making. And so I worked in the computer lab for \$5 an hour for a while. And when I was at the computer lab, I really excelled and I was just helping people. That's always been something I'd love to do. And one day I met this woman and that was has been what I've said is my big break. And I met this woman named Marty Ingle who was the CEO of a woman owned firm called The Angel Group. And she said: "Hey, I want to post this job." and like.. "What kind of job is that? She's like" "It's help desk job, you know, in DC." And I said: "Well, I'm looking for a job." And she said: "Have you prayed about it?" And I said: "I have." And she said "Are you free later, and I had an interview!" And it didn't work out. But she followed up with me. And I did get a job with them. And my first job was teaching Lotus Notes at the World Bank. And so I went from teaching at the World Bank to working on a project with the FBI and South Carolina where I was basically doing instructional design, I would design training materials, I was planning all the variables in this new software that the software company developed testing software to actually delivering like a six week training in South Carolina, and then on to the FBI for another project. And while I was there, I ended up getting a job at SAP, which is where I worked for over 13 years....started out as a trainer, and six months in the salesperson was like you would be great at sales. And I literally got myself gig after six months. And what's actually funny is, in my interview, I knew nothing about sales. And the general manager at the time had told me like: "Hey, I know you're interested in this sales job, but I really want someone more experienced." And I'm like "Okay, cool." But the sales guy was so adamant. He wanted me that he when the VP of Sales flew down, he scheduled an interview, and I had on a lavender suit. And what's funny is in the interview, I remember he asked me: "Well, what do you think the salespersons job is like, what are you going to do?" And I said: "I'll be eye candy for my clients, and they will like me, and I will get them to buy everything that we sell." Well, I got the job. I worked in sales for over a decade, I was consistently you know, a top performer, earned President's Club, which is like the highest achievement of anyone in sales, which means you basically hit your numbers, which could be anywhere from 500,000 to my highest number was 11 million. And I was consistently in the top percent, the only Black female or one of a few for over a decade before I left.

Christine Job (00:12:03)

So I asked Claire to describe to me where she developed a love for international travel.

Claire Soares (00:12:09)

So my love for international travel began after high school. My first trip was to the Bahamas, and I went with my mother, her friend and another girlfriend. And that was my first trip and it blew me away. Just going to a new place experiencing new food. It felt like all my sensories from what I was seeing, hearing tasting, all those things were tantalize. And I was just like loving it. And I was there when MTV was filming at in the Bahamas with Redman.

And it's funny I was in some of the footage, just like hanging out jet skiing with Redman and just meeting some of the people on the like MTV episode. And it just blew me away being in a foreign country and just the exploration and of a new place and trying new things. And that was like the beginning my next year from there that I remember was a solo trip to Paris on my way to see my boyfriend who for whatever reason he was he was sent over to Italy to a small town called Turin and so he was there for training. And so when I went to Paris, I stayed in Mont Parnes, which is a small neighborhood like outside of Paris. And it was the most amazing thing because in the neighborhood, they speak less English. But every day I would walk to like a local bakery and get a croissant or any type of breakfast thing. I would go and have a coffee. And it was at that moment where I realized like, you know, all those years when someone says they don't speak English, and you're like you start speaking slower is if that makes a difference. They were doing that to me. And it was funny. And so I was just in a position where literally I was there a week by myself. When I was in the neighborhood, I didn't speak much. So it was a lot of just being and cell phones weren't that big then so I wasn't like on my cell phone on Instagram or whatever. I literally was just hearing the sounds, the smells. And I would go out every day and explore a new market or a store. And I just loved it. I absolutely loved it. I was on the train system, just exploring by myself navigating and just learning how to get around how to talk to people how to figure out what to do, it just blew my mind. And then when I got connected on Facebook, there was a lot of different black travel groups that were popping up. And that's when it really set off because once I met people who look like me, and I saw them traveling that really just amplified like Yo, you can do this yourself. And that's when I really started going hard because I had the financial means at that time. So I would actually start traveling like every month I

Christine Job (00:14:38)

I asked Claire to tell me what was going on in her life before she decided to pack up our things and move abroad.

Claire Soares (00:14:48)

So six months before was when I had just came back to work after taking a three month leave of absence. And when I came back I already knew that in May, which was six months later basically that I was going to resign. And so at that point I was going through the flow with work, just doing what I needed to do to get by. But it was also during that time that I started to notice a lot of things that were happening in the workplace. I noticed that, you know, there were White males, there was one White male specifically that I worked for that did not like me and had an issue. And he would literally go to my boss and have and talk to her about issues about me. And then she would bring them up in my one on ones. And I remember my response to her was: "OK, well, if someone has an issue, like, shouldn't you be reinforcing they discuss these things with me?" Because basically, my boss was coming to me as if those things were facts. And when I would ask her, you know, more information, she didn't have it, when I would ask her what she would do differently. She didn't have it. So I felt like it was just a lot of noise. And you know, one of the things I always coach other Black women when they're in the workplace, you know, a lot of times we're told that we're too aggressive. We're too this is to ask very specific questions on what specifically they're referring to what specifically, they would advise I do, because I've often found in my experience, that when you do ask those specific questions, you don't get specific responses,

because it's just made up. It doesn't exist. It's noise. I felt like I was being gaslit saying this was an issue. And that was something early on in my career, you're too aggressive than when I was being nice. They're like, ohwell, it's something else. Like it was always like something was a thing.

Christine Job 16:28 (00:16:28)

I asked Claire, what made her decide that living abroad was the next chapter in her journey.

Claire Soares (00:16:36)

So I've always wanted to live abroad, but honestly, it wasn't until I had like my breakdown of like 2017, where I just went through a really rough patch with work, where I wasn't sure if I belonged anymore. I had gone through the stressors of feeling like I was passed over for promotions, seeing my White peers, excel, and then knowing that I'm like one of the top performers, but haven't been able to excel. And literally, I ended up taking a leave of absence. And it was the perfect storm where I took a leave of absence, I also suffered a miscarriage. And after being out of work for three months, I came back with a vengeance. And I had friends that lived abroad. But when I came back, while I was gone, and I was on leave, my friend had said: "Hey, like can you come visit?" Like he knew I wasn't feeling well. And I was like, no, and he was like: "You know what, Claire, like, you just need to come down here." And on that weekend, I came down to Playa Del Carmen. And I met a group of Black women who lived here that had families had kids were single, like running businesses, all different walks of life, just living their best life in Mexico. And it was at that moment, that weekend, I decided I was going to move here. And I think I needed to see someone who looks like me, but also the capabilities of still being able to have a family getting married and all those things because I at the time, I was thinking like, well, if I move abroad, I can't have those. And when I saw that people were having those, that's where it clicked for me. And that's when I started the process of finding a place.

Christine Job (00:18:16)

So Claire has decided to move to Mexico. So I asked her to describe the day that she left. What was it like and what was she feeling. And when she finally landed what was going through her mind,

Claire Soares (00:18:31)

Man, that day was super exciting. I was up probably all night long, coming with very limited sleep, I packed my big ol roller duffel, several carry on bags, and I have my dog in tow with me, by the way. And it was super, I felt relieved. I felt relieved, I felt excited. And I had friends here already. So my best friend, he came to the airport with his son and I still have the picture that day of when they came to pick me up, you know, you know, my nephew's like this walking my dog and I've got the big old, you know, cart that I'm pushing on my luggage, it was definitely a sigh of relief because living abroad, the one thing that you don't have that you have in the US that you're not forced or faced with a lot of the microaggressions in the US. You don't necessarily feel unsafe as you do in the US when it comes to like a cop stopping you like it's not scary at all. like no one's gonna kill you, you're not worried about that you're not there's not any bit of, you know, worry for the most part. And it's just a different, you're on a different side of privilege. And the thing that I always think when I think about Black people who are ex-pats is there's like stages to what I like to

coined the term becoming an expat from when when you start the process. You're thinking about it and then you actually start planning and then you're actually there. And once you're there there is this process that a lot of people I don't feel talk about enough. That process of just kind of shedding like my one friend and a Tisha will says, is you're shedding. So you're getting to a safe place where you basically can live a life where you're not being oppressed. And you're not the oppressor, either in this country, you're able to freely live and let go. But a part of being an expat is that shedding process that Tish talks about, where you're letting go of all these things of who you thought you were right? Because whatever you were brought up to be, you were coached to be this or maybe for me, my parents coached me to be an amazing functioning human being in society and participate and have a corporate job and climb up the ladder. And those are the things that I did, because that's what I was taught. But that wasn't what made me happy. And so being an expat, I am like unlearning, and getting rid of this corporate PTSD of what my life was and what I thought it should be to now I'm having to reinvent what my life actually is.

Christine Job 20:58 (00:20:58)

I know a lot of you have pets, and you may be really concerned about how do you take your pet abroad. But I think as you've heard, in past podcasts, we do have some guests that have taken their pets abroad. And Claire is one of them. She has an adorable, adorable dog, who you probably heard at the very beginning of this interview, and she took her abroad. And so I asked her what was the process like of getting her dog abroad.

Claire Soares (00:21:28)

My dog pretty much travels from Mexico to the US, Mexico to US. I actually don't take her like on big abroad trips, she travels very well. So if you're traveling with a small pet, which is my pet, they can fit in your bag underneath the seat in front of you. So what you have to do is two weeks, three weeks before the trip, train them to get in the bag on command by simply teaching them to get in their bag, let them sit in the bag with zip shut and start with 30 minutes go up to an hour all the way up to four hours so that they standard bags, they can't come out of their bag. And then the other option is your dog can be certified as a service animal. And you can look that up online, you basically can get tags, a service animal is a dog that helps you with a requirement, something that you need for your life, whether it's like detecting allergens or something like that. So if your dog's a service animal, and they help you with the life function, then they can sit on your lap. But either way, that's how your dogs can travel with you. So she's really good. She doesn't like flying as much anymore, she actually has a little bit of anxiety. So I don't like to fly her. So usually I dropped her off and my parents and she stays there while I'm in like South Africa, or wherever I'm going,

Christine Job (00:22:39)

I asked Claire to describe what her life looks like in Mexico.

Claire Soares (00:22:44)

My life looks like a very, not sheltered life, but I have someone prepare my meals. I'm like eating vegan as much as possible, or shall I say plant based. So my meals are prepared by a chef, they bring over multiple meals a day, my laundry is picked up, it's dropped off, my spa person comes over every week, I have every service you can absolutely imagine. And I don't have to pick up a finger. But I do that because I am solely focused on my businesses. I've

several businesses that I'm running, creating. And so right now I'm in a stage over the next three years that I'm in full blast focus on growing this empire. So that I can be in a better position to do a lot of the legacy things that I want to do, which is to help people grow their own business to help you know travel entrepreneurs be great at customer service, but you have to put in this work. And so this life that I live here, it would be extremely expensive to afford that in the US. Like for instance, last night, I went out to have Sundowners, which is where you have cocktails at sunset. And I was at this beach club that's right on the beach, and the breeze was strong. The vibe was amazing. And it looked beautiful. The place is beautiful. It's a luxury hotel on the beach. And sitting there it still feels surreal that this is my life that I can enjoy this. And it's not super expensive, like literally was there maybe three, four hours, several glasses of wine and dinner. And it was just amazing. And it's just, it's really just a blessing to be able to live this. And so like just the simple things of being able to walk to everything I need being able to like ride my bike and to not be on a schedule or have to get on a meeting like I own my own business. So there's a huge amount of empowerment that I have now that I control my own schedule, and I can do what I like and because your cost of living is not as expensive for a lot of people here they only work part time. You don't work full time, necessarily.

Christine Job (00:24:59)

I wanted to know what the cost of living was in Playa Del Carmen until I asked Claire to tell me and compared to the last US location she lived.

Claire Soares (00:25:10)

So when I lived in the States when I left, I was paying close to \$4,000 a month and I lived in Oakland and the Jack London area a few blocks from the waterfront. And that was for two bedroom apartment, probably close to like 1500 square feet maybe. And when I lived in the DMV, which is the Virginia Maryland, DC area, I was paying around 2500-2600 for a one bedroom with a den on National Harbor. In Mexico when I first moved to Mexico, my place was around 1100 US dollars fully furnished, including cable, and phone service. So huge difference. And it was a two bedroom, two bath, fully secure building, which I only had in Maryland with parking space, rooftop pool, like amazing. So it's a huge price difference where you're talking about more than half because most of the places are fully furnished. And then food wise, like for instance, when I order food from the chef's here, it can cost anywhere like the one chef I'm ordering from next week, it's \$25. And that includes three meals with snacks, all homemade, and you can pick what you'd like and delivered to your house that morning. And then when I order out a lot of times I order from restaurants, it could probably costs anywhere from seven to \$10 a meal. And this is for like vegan plant based like stuff that would cost you way more than this. So it's very, very affordable. Massages, I get a weekly massage and that costs 350 pesos for an hour for Swedish. And so that comes out to be around \$17 US. Laundry is like 50 cents a pound I think something like that super cheap. I mean they'll pick it up for \$2 and deliver it you can get groceries delivered from any of the local places you can text them with you want. Fresh fruit juices are like \$1 if you want like a green and orange juice or a carrot juice or like \$1 for like a 16 ounce, so huge price difference to allow you to eat healthy without having the astronomic price tag.

Christine Job (00:27:28)

So Claire is in Playa Del Carmen and I asked her to describe what her first year of living abroad in Mexico was like.

Claire Soares (00:27:38)

So my first year was definitely amazing. And it's still amazing. The one thing is that I think in the Playa Del Carmen area someone said there's like 1500 restaurants and I'm like a food foodie. And I love exploration. So the first year was just a lot of learning the ropes, learning how to contact the water guy to deliver my water, and understanding how that works and how I need to be home because if not, he's gonna ignore my text. Learning where to get fresh fruit. There's like a million grocery stores it feels like at least six that I can walk to. So understanding what store has why because I often feel like there's no one store that has everything that I want also, like coming in the Black community was actually the easiest part. I think anyone who's looking at moving abroad Playa Del Carmen is a great jump off spot to start in. If you are concerned about a community, because there's many expats here. I think last time we got together, it was something like 30 something, we got together to celebrate Juneteenth. And so there's so many people here. So you've so many opportunities, there is a woman here and in Shah who organizes events here every month. So there's lots of opportunities to hang out with people and lots of opportunities to meet different kinds of people. So you're not going to be alone. There's obviously a lot of different cities in Mexico and around the world you can move to and so people can always go online, there's different Black expat groups for probably every single country that you can actually join, which is actually helpful to understand a what you need there, what you don't need. And any questions on the process after you've kind of done a little research yourself.

Christine Job (00:29:12)

I asked Claire whether she felt Mexican politics affected her day to day life.

Claire Soares (00:29:18)

So in general, yes and no. So since the pandemic, absolutely the one thing as we were going into the pandemic that was uncomfortable for me was the fact that because I don't fluently speak Spanish or read fluently in Spanish, I felt like I didn't know when we were going to be on lockdown. I felt like I was always finding out about things later. And so the things like beaches, clothes, or you can't go here, you can't go there. My concern was because I didn't speak the language. We found out about it secondhand, if you scrounge through the different expat groups, and so the different politics around you know, getting shakedown by police, you know. We stop one day and potentially, it was like a shakedown. But because we didn't speak great Spanish he finally just let us go. But yeah, I mean, in general, like, it's extremely safe here like for, you know, and I'm speaking for me as a Black tourist. It's extremely safe here. There's not a lot of things that happen here. When you look at like what can happen like in the US in any major city, so you're generally safe unless you're, you know, doing something you're probably not supposed to be doing. But yeah, no, I don't feel I feel like you're actually in a bubble. Quite honestly, I live in Centro, which is the central part of town. I live in a condo hotel that has 24 hour security, and 24 hour concierge, I can order Amazon. So my life here, I purposely built it. So it was similar to my life in California. I don't know that my life will be like this forever, but it's what I need right now. So it's comforting for me to live in the neighborhood I live in because I don't have to worry, I can walk in the middle of the night. But I think like, you can have anything you want here. I



mean, you can live further away from the tourist area, and they have amazing homes for \$500 a month. Like it just depends what you want, but I don't feel like I'm impacted by corruption or things like that.

Christine Job (00:31:20)

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I also want to know whether Claire felt US politics still affected her while she is living abroad.

Claire Soares (00:32:33)

No they don't. They don't affect me directly. But more so indirectly. When I saw everything that was happening after Mr. Floyd was murdered, it was very painful. And not only that, watching how the pandemic has been handled in the US, it's difficult to watch, because I still have family that lives in the States. So that part is hard. And then watching all the marches and everything was extremely traumatized, not the marches. But online through social media. There were so many people talking about the first time I was stopped by a cop the first time this and seeing that was traumatizing, because it was bringing up a lot of unresolved things that I dealt with, like when I was stopped by the cops and they pulled guns on me when I was in high school. And so looking at everything that has happened has definitely like ripped open a wound from thinking about all the things that happened to me, in corporate America from being told that my you know, I remember my colleague told me when I wear my Afro I would never get promoted. And he apologized years later, but he was actually right, in hindsight. And so it's been hard. But again, like I go to therapy to get past these things. I'm in like such a better place to understand my emotions and be able to process those things so that they're no longer triggering. But it has been tough, because like if I wanted to be involved, I wanted to play a part of this movement. And so I have been thinking, and I know now what I'm going to do, but at the time it was stressful because I wasn't there with people with my people, right? I'm like abroad. And I actually felt bad in some sense that I was living this amazing life abroad. Even quarantine here in Mexico looks way different. We still live in our best life. There's still beaches to go to every day that never close in small beach towns. So there was like a little bit of like, you feel guilty and I had to step out of that. And I had to remember like, I have built this life purposely because this is the life I want and I don't have to feel guilty. But there is that sense that you feel stressed because you want to help your people.

Christine Job (00:34:41)

I asked Claire to describe what her experience of dating abroad has been like.

Claire Soares (00:34:46)

So for me, like I'm definitely not the poster child of dating abroad. I have consistently dated in the last two years, but the people that I've dated have been Americans. So I usually date Americans who work remote like me, meaning they can come to Mexico and we can travel together. So those are the people that I was dating. I'm just now since the pandemic, now like dating more people that live here, because no one can really travel here back and forth like that there are people here that are moving here. But it's not like people can just pop over for the weekend like before and come and you can come to the states like that's gone.

Christine Job (00:35:24)

So you may already know Claire from her wildly successful business and brand Up In The Air Life. I asked her to tell me the origin story of the business, and what kinds of products and services she provides.

Claire Soares (00:35:38)

So I started out wanting to create a blog. And I hired two ladies who founded a company called Portable Incomes. And this was back in like 2013. And so I hired them to help me kind of tap into what I wanted to do. And my idea was a blog. And in part of my business coaching, we went through a process of discussing all the ways to monetize my business. And essentially, like creating a travel company became one of them, because my friends were like, I had been planning so many things, I had plans for a group of people to go see the watch the Throne tour, and we had like 30 people come for the weekend. And I kind of organized that. And you know, me, and my homeboy was like pulling things together, I had organized a small group to go to Thailand. And I was just kind of doing it for free. And so when Croatia came up, when everybody wanted to go to Yacht Week, I started a company. And that was the beginning. And then from there, our second trip was to Mexico. And I did it with one of my business partners. And then from there, I still didn't know what I was doing. But each year, I think the third year, we had maybe five trips. And then the next year, we had 10 trips. And it just literally got to the point where the brand was created through that process. And that's why fundamentally like, I always tell people, a lot of people put a lot of emphasis on a business plan, like I didn't have any of that, like I started out with, you know, this idea of Yacht Week. But the one thing I did have is, through my decade, plus years of being in corporate, I had a business acumen I worked in sales. So I understood sales, I understood packaging, I understood customer service. And so I took what I had, and I ran with it to create this business that went from Year 1, 16000 revenue to close to 2 million last year. And that's a huge feat, I was actually doing research. And I was reading that a very small percentage, it's like less than 5% of women owned businesses actually even hit a million dollars in revenue. And so I was just like, wow, like I had no idea how huge that was. And so since then, I had created three travel companies Up In The Air Life, which is still alive today, I also created Urban Yacht Life, which is a yachting company that folded it into Up In The Air Life. So we just sell everything under up near life. And then I also found it Inclusive Travel with inclusive, which is a brand that was essentially connecting peer to peer for home rentals, and apartment rentals and things like that. So I've Up In The Air Life is the only one active today. And then I also started a coaching business two years ago. But now we're like formally launching where I offer one on one coaching services to a few entrepreneurs that

would like to build teams, they like to, to improve their online presence, they'd like help with operationalizing their back office so that they can scale and they want to build teams. And so that's what I help people in one on one. And then later on, I will be launching a full service group coaching program where it will be pre recorded training. And I'll be guiding people through that process of my program to basically take their businesses so that they can be in a position to scale to seven figures.

Christine Job (00:39:01)

I asked Claire to share some advice for all of you who are considering building a business abroad, or building a business that can support you while you live abroad. And this is what she shared,

Claire Soares (00:39:14)

I would say to start getting clear on what you want your life to look like. So when I say that, I mean, what would your perfect life look like? Are you living on the beach? Are you living in a city? How many hours a week? Are you working? Like do you want to family? Do you want to be married, like get clear on what that picture looks like? And when you know what that endgame looks like you start working from there. So if you want to work this high power job, you know, in the fitness industry, and that's your long term goal, then you need to start mapping it out backwards. And then you can start looking at people who are in that position and look at what they did reach out to them but you really need to understand what the end state looks like. And then based on that you would then start to build your life. So if you know that you only want to work 20 hours a week, you probably need to start looking at and googling and watching YouTube videos to understand what business models have passive income. And once you understand then do you have skillsets to develop one of these? And if so, go down that path. Look for coaches look for programs that can help you, you know, for say, you know, create online notebooks and Kindle books or stores in Shopify, that you can create products that pretty much are going to be dropshipped and deliver themselves. So you really got to figure out like, what's your passion, what you want to do. And once you figure out that, then you need to align yourself in some type of business model that has been proven to work. So one, clarify like who you are, understand whether that's right a list of all your strengths, your weaknesses, ask those around you what they think, are your strengths, weaknesses, and where is your zone of genius. And once you figure those things out, start to write a list of things you have accomplished, to then come to what you'd want to provide, what can you teach someone that you can monetize. And then once you figure that out, then you would essentially the easiest way is to start helping people in a one on one format with that, and then once you start helping people, you can get a better idea of what you can offer as a service, I always tell people that I got to where I am by having experts help me. So I think the best way is to invest in some type of business coaching or some type of program. There are lots of programs out there to help you get clarified on what your offer is who you are. And so I would invest in any of those different programs, or a business coach that can help you do the same. And I would say that's where you want to get started.

Christine Job (00:41:47)

Claire referred to building a legacy in this interview. And so I asked her to go a little bit deeper and tell us more about what building a legacy means to her and how she's doing that right now.

Claire Soares (00:42:00)

Legacy to me is like what I'm going to be remembered by when I'm gone. So when I'm gone, how are people going to remember Claire? And so when I talk about legacy projects, they're all about serving. How do I serve people? How do I impact the most lives. And that's why my coaching program is the biggest thing most important to me, because that's how I want to be remembered. I want to be remembered as someone who was giving someone who was serving someone that impacted so many people's life. And the reason why I'm creating the podcast the YouTube channel is because when I'm gone, I want people to be able to tap into my mindset, my thoughts, some of my mantras and how I live my life because I would love to empower another woman who has a nine-to-fiver, like me who really had all these career ambitions, and you get to the top or you're making all this money and you're still not happy. And they need to know that it is okay to feel that way. And it's okay to let go of the dreams of our parents. And so when I think about financial wealth, when I wrote down the other day, like what are your business / life goals, my goals, predominantly our life goals, my business fuels, those goals to happen. So like my number one goal right now is to be financially wealthy and abundant with zero debts. And that also includes retiring my parents as soon as possible, I do not want them to have to work anymore. I want them they're in their 60s, low 60s, I want them to enjoy the rest of their life, I do not want them to work a single day. So I am really motivated now to have enough money saved so I can help them pay off their house and give them money monthly, so that they can live a life and not have to worry about working or doing anything they don't want to do. That is like my motivation. And when that's done for me to be able to also have enough financial things. So I don't have to do anything outside of the projects I really want to do like, which is more so helping people which often doesn't necessarily have a price tag. So that's what I consider legacy.

Christine Job (00:44:18)

I asked Claire whether she has a motto, a prayer and affirmation, a mantra that she lives by something that she currently is using in her life today. And this is what she said,

Claire Soares (00:44:30)

My motto is Do Be Live, because I believe in doing what you want to do, being who you are, or who you want to be and living the life of your dreams in the now. So really a proponent of taking advantage of every single second every single day. So that you know we don't get into the pandemic and you see a lot of people have regrets. I wish I would have did that. I wish I would did this. If you live every day and you live every moment in fulfillment And you're also being who you want to be, like always or as much as possible, you don't have to live a life of regret.

Christine Job (00:45:06)

I asked Claire, what is her definition of wellness? And how has living abroad influenced that definition in that practice of wellness?

Claire Soares (00:45:18)

So for me wellness is it's mind, body and soul. I think a lot of people miss the mind part. And when I say that, I mean, yes, we know, like, we can say self care, I'm going to get a massage. Yep, I do that every week. But what I think and what I believe in, arguably, a part that's missing is some sort of therapy, you know, I have participated in therapy for over a year now it is hands-down the best gift and investment into myself I've ever made into my life. And when I say therapy, meaning, and especially when you're abroad, and you're for a lot of people, they're abroad, and they're a digital nomad, which means they work for themselves, they have to make money for themselves, they don't work for a company, there are some people that do but there's a great deal of us who are digital nomads. And so when you are that it can be scary, it can be lonely. And so what therapy does is therapy allows you to tap in to who you really are and understand why you're triggered by things and understand how to function better with other people that have their own dreams, their own issues, like how to be able to have empathy, and understand how they feel when they're reacting and being a better functioning human being. And a part of that shedding process, I feel does include some type of therapy, because as a Black American living in America, there is a significant amount of trauma that we have experienced us significant. And when we're moving abroad, I feel like there is a releasing process of that trauma. And that process can take, you know, as long as it may take for some people, right. But after you get past that, I feel like then you're in the next phase, which to me is social impact that once I'm abroad, if I make it past that stage, and some people don't, and that's okay, too. But the last stage and this the stage I'm at now, and maybe this isn't the last stage for the stage, and now is social impact, where now I am actively working with locals to help them generate financial wealth in their lives. So I help right now I'm working with one local, and I'm helping her and she already has her Instagram page that I set up her Facebook page. And so I've set those things up for her, and also taught her how to do it for herself. So she has her own Instagram page. She knows how to use the right hashtags. And then we have ongoing trainings to talk about reoccurring model referral systems in general marketing and business things that actually will increase her wealth once tourism picks up. And so that's also something that I will be a poster chart, I'll be talking to as many expats as well about this aspect that once you get to this stage, or if you're ready to start giving back in your community, as Black Americans who are traveling and living abroad, I was speaking with someone else. And they were saying to me that those of us who actually live abroad like you've like crossed this different threshold, that you're a very unique person because of the risk that your family feels that you potentially feels and all the battles of you, leaving the US to come somewhere else that everyone's looking at you crazy and you may not get a lot of support. But the fact that you're thriving probably means that you have a very strong sense of self and a strong confidence. And based on that you're in a great position to help those around you in that country who are being oppressed, to help them generate wealth and help them overcome those things in very small ways that you have no idea that you have these different skills that you can help them.

Christine Job (00:49:00)

Thank you so much Claire for sharing your story. I greatly appreciate you. If you are interested in keeping up with Claire, you can via social media.

Claire Soares (00:49:12)

You can find me online at [clairebsoares.com](http://clairebsoares.com) and [clairebsoares](#) Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, that is that is me.

Christine Job (00:49:27)

Thank you again, Claire. And if you all want to learn more about Claire, be sure to check out her show notes on the website [flourishintheforeign.com/episode/claire](http://flourishintheforeign.com/episode/claire). Also if you're looking for some one on one moving abroad with intention, advice and you want to chat with me go ahead and take advantage of the one year anniversary celebrating Flourish In The Foreign and 50% off sale, which is for a limited time. I've only got to tell you, but I'm gonna say it again, it's for a limited time. So go ahead and book now you can book into the future, just as long as it's in 2021. So make it happen you can book for in two weeks, you can book in October this year is steadily winding down. So if you want to get in, definitely do it. Now, again, as I told you before, I have limited spots for this discount, the discount code is `fiffLOURISHINTHEFOREIGN50`. If you want the 30% of the one on ones, definitely go ahead and do that. And again, this is for a limited time, these one hour sessions are not recorded, you will be given a questionnaire and you get to pick my brain, and we get to chat for one hour about your moving abroad strategy. The discount code is `FIF50`. Make sure you go ahead and put that in today. If you are interested in launching your own podcast, I highly recommend joining WOC Podcasters Insiders Membership. I've been a member of this membership for a while now. And honestly, I feel that the reason the podcast has done so well. And the reason the podcast is continuing to grow and take on even more exciting opportunities is because of the support and the great advice that I get from Debbie OC insiders. So if you're wanting to launch your podcast or just get more serious about your podcast, or perhaps monetize your podcast, definitely join the W OC Podcasters Insiders Membership today. And you can do so via the link in the description of this episode, or on the website [flourishintheforeign.com/resources](http://flourishintheforeign.com/resources). It's a great way for you to support this podcast at no additional cost to you. If you have not followed the podcast on YouTube or on Instagram. What are you doing? There's a lot of great content on both platforms. On Instagram. I've done many, many, many IG lives, some solo and some with past guests that are jam packed with amazing gems on moving and living abroad. And on YouTube, I really have a lot of great conversations with some past guests about what they're up to now and how living abroad really has changed their lives. So check it out. [youtube.com/flourishintheforeign](https://youtube.com/flourishintheforeign) and [instagram.com/flourishforeign](https://instagram.com/flourishforeign). As always, thanks so much to Zachary Higgs for producing the music of this here podcast. If you're in need of music for your next creative endeavour, he is definitely your guy. You can find all of his information in the show notes of this episode. And please remember that it's not about getting abroad. It's not about being abroad. It's about the thriving abroad. So go abroad and cultivate a life well lived. See you next time! Bye!

Christine Job: (00:53:32)

On the next episode of Flourish In The Foreign: "For me wellness is really just tied to just spaces where you can just exist without having to explain your existence because explain your existence is mentally exhausting task".