



Episode 003 - High fashion bags and the ultimate low-risk approach to starting a business. With Zoe Cohen

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This is the Destination Entrepreneurs Podcast with Hugh Whalan, session number three.

Welcome to the Destination Entrepreneurs Podcast where we share the stories of everyday people who ditch their 9-5 life to set up profitable businesses in exotic locations around the globe. Now, here is your host Hugh Whalan.

Hugh:

Hi folks, delighted to be here again for another episode of Destination Entrepreneurs, and, boy, do we have a wonderful guest for you today! I've been getting a lot of feedback on this podcast on my blog, and please keep those comments coming, whether they're good or bad, it helps me improve the stuff that I'm saying and it helps me find the right kind of destination entrepreneurs to talk to so that I can deliver the informant that you really want to hear. I get a lot of questions from people about how the whole moving to another country with very little money in your pocket, knowing very few people on the ground, how that all works. Today we're talking to Zoe Cohen who'd never been to Africa before she went to Kenya. She travelled to Kenya specifically for a fulltime job that she was moving there for. At some time fairly quickly she realized that fulltime job wasn't what she really wanted to do, and what she did though was very clever. She used her spare time on the weekends and at nights to start a fashion business using recycled leather from leather jackets for clutch bags and handbags. And the way that she did this in her spare time meant that she was getting paid a full time's salary while she was experimenting and figuring out whether her business idea actually had legs. Zoe has fit a lot into her short time in Nairobi. Not only has she started a business but she witnessed the Westgate terrorist attacks on the mall. And she's one of the first people I've



talked to who's really managed to find a reliable, supportive local business partner who's helped her navigate the waters. So we've got a lot to learn from Zoe.

Zoe's approach is about the lowest risk for destination entrepreneurship that you're going to hear about. Following her approach will mean things proceed a little slower, because you won't be able to devote full time to your passion. On the flipside, if you don't know how to fund yourself, this might just be the opportunity for you. So let's jump straight into it. I know Zoe through a friend of mine, they did a master's program together at John Hopkins. You'll have to be a little forgiving with the sound quality, she's talking to me from the field, that's the only way I could hear her story, and her story is really worth listening to. So we join Zoe when she's talking about her life before that master's program and her experience with development work.

Zoe: Ever since undergrad I've worked in the area of international development. I first started off in Peru where I was working for a research organization, running some studies on microfinance institutions, and then I had moved back to the States and I was working more in the area of program management for judicial reform programs that were run out of the Dominican Republic and Equatorial Guinea, but I was based in DC for them.

Hugh: Did you get to travel to any of those places?

Zoe: To the Dominican Republic, yes, Equatorial Guinea, no.

Hugh: That would have been interesting. So you did the master's program at John Hopkins, and was Nairobi a logical choice for you?

Zoe: No, not at all. My experience had really always been in Latin America. Starting in college when I studied abroad I spent some summers overseas too, then I lived in Peru right after school, then I was traveling to and from the Dominican Republic a bit when I was back in the US, so I had always thought that I would move back to Latin America. I speak Spanish and



Portuguese. But I ended up applying for a job with [Catholic Relief Services](#) and it was their management training program. I was really interested in the job, and I knew that signing up for this meant that I was not going to have a say in where they were going to send me. So I ended up getting the position with them and then getting placed in Nairobi.

Hugh: And what did you think, had you been to Africa before?

Zoe: I came here by myself, but I never really had this sense of being alone here, because I had people to reach out to immediately, who immediately embraced me upon arrival.

Hugh: That's interesting. So you basically set up a network for yourself before you even had arrived, because you knew people who'd lived here previously?

Zoe: Exactly. I had planted the seeds and then how this world works is that it's a tiny world of lots of connections, so it turns out that a lot of people I had been put in touch with actually were already friends with each other in Nairobi. So it just worked out really nicely, that you fall into this community that's pretty tight-knit upon arrival.

Hugh: I imagine that that had all sorts of dividends in terms of finding a place to live, in terms of fitting into a social circle, and in terms of figuring out how things work for expats, etc?

Zoe: Exactly. I was lucky with my work, my job really set me up with a lot of stuff, my house with a car. But in terms of the social scene, that was really— Actually I'll tell you it's both a strength and a weakness of Nairobi, the huge and strong-knit connected expat scene, that it's really easy to fall into a group of people that are very social and do really interesting things and, therefore, interesting people to talk to. But I think something that could be the downside of it is that it's also really easy in Nairobi to live in a bubble of all foreigners.

Hugh: Tell me a little bit about moving to Nairobi with the knowledge that Catholic Relief Services were going to set you up with an apartment and



you were going to a job. That must take a lot of weight off your mind knowing that some of those things are covered for you?

Zoe: It does. Now that I have changed paths, I'd say almost 180 degree turn, I wish I could go back and appreciate that life. It was really wonderful. I never did peace core, but the organization that I had worked for right out of college in Peru was really small at the time, it's now gotten much larger, but it was very small, very ad hoc, you just hit the ground running and figure things out as you go along, and there wasn't that much support for setting up your life overseas. And so I was really excited to move to a different country where I had a really structured and large support system during my job.

Hugh: That probably can't be underestimated. I think a lot of the people who will be listening to this may be haven't traveled that much overseas, maybe haven't lived overseas, and little things like setting up a bank account, finding somewhere to live, getting a phone, are all so complicated when you first get into a new country, that the fact you were able to step into something that was pretty well established is definitely a real bonus.

Zoe: And then you can really immediately focus on your quality of life, making friends, feeling settled at work, getting into the kind of work that you're doing immediately, and you don't have to get bogged down in administrative details of life. But I think a lot of times when people think for living overseas, they don't realize that it can actually be a lot easier to live overseas than in your home country. Especially if I am from the East Coast of the States, if I were to move to the West Coast, I think it would be a culture shock to me there too, and no one would be reaching out to me to make sure that I was doing okay, because they're like, 'Whatever, you're from Philadelphia, you should figure things out. This is San Francisco, this is not anything different'. [laughter]

Hugh: How long did you work for Catholic Relief Services for, and what were you doing for them?



Zoe: I worked for them fulltime for about a year, and I was doing their management training program. The idea of it is that they bring people in for nine months to a year to work in a country program, so I was with Kenya, and then they send you off to manage programs in a different country once you're trained up. But that is what I came into the organization thinking I was going to do. But that plan really changed for me once I started to get settled in Nairobi and see what else was out here. I think I really got bit by the bug of Nairobi in a lot of ways. In terms of entrepreneurship and in the sense that right now in Kenya is a time when things are really changing, and you can really be part of that change in a lot of the smaller companies and organizations that are setting up shop here. And then also just feeling more connected to the community here, and not wanting to leave right away. So I told CRS that I didn't want to move with them, and so once my year contract that I had with them was up I ended up staying on with them as a consultant on a part-time basis, which is actually what I'm still doing a little bit for them now.

Hugh: Perfect. So you came into the country, you spent a year acclimating to the way business is done and the way things work in Nairobi, and you spent it with an organization that was large enough to make sure you weren't wanting for most things, and they let you transition into a consulting gig, which probably gave you the time to start looking at other opportunities?

Zoe: Exactly.

Hugh: What were those other opportunities?

Zoe: I started looking more in the world of social enterprise and social business. So in the world of international development these days I would say a lot of organizations have started to take a different spin on traditional kind of what I think the people in the UK will call charity work, well people in the States would say NGO work, and have started looking at how can you have a special impact but still have financial bottom-line and still be working for a profit. So there are a ton of different organizations here that do that kind



of work, ranging from solar power, to clean cook stoves, to mobile technology, to sanitation companies, to even fast-moving consumer goods, small distributors. And so what I ended up getting caught in the direction most was the mobile communication companies, and I think something that appealed to me was that a lot of them were using program evaluation and program surveys as the basis of what their core business was going to be, and that calls on some previous experience I had doing research. And then what also appeals to me is that those companies work with a whole array of different kinds of both non-profit and for-profit companies, that some have social bottom lines, some don't have social bottom lines. So working with these companies you really get a sense of all of the different change that is happening and all the progress I would say, for lack of a better word, that's going on in not only Kenya but in the region.

Hugh: You currently work for a mobile tech company in Nairobi, is that right?

Zoe: Yes.

Hugh: And so in the background while you were working for CRS and while you've been involved with one or two tech companies, you've been doing some interesting things with your own business. Could you tell us a little about it and how you started it and we'll let the story evolve.

Zoe: One of my friends from university, from undergrad, was here visiting me about a year ago now. We went out to dinner one night and I started telling her that I had started conversations with my boss at CRS telling her that I didn't think I was going to continue with the company fulltime and that I really wanted to stay in Nairobi and try and look for something else here. And as I was telling her this, it became clear in the conversation that I still wasn't quite sure what exactly I was looking for, but that I was really inspired by this entrepreneur spirit in this city. And I found that people who had started businesses here it was really interesting to get their story, to learn what they were doing. And so she said, Why don't you start your own thing? And I laughed and brushed it off. And she really pushed me on it,



and she asked me if I had had any ideas, and I started telling her about the design scene here and how it was really exciting for me to start meeting more people who are in the design world. And I was also thinking about my interest always in crafts and development, and how you could push artisans in different countries to start developing higher end products of the traditional crafts that they have, and how that could contribute to improve livelihoods for them. And she was joking with me that this is something that I have talked to her about since I was 22 years old and lived in Peru, and so why don't I try something with that? And she kept pushing me and asking me if I had ideas, and I told her I had had one idea about starting a handbag line that used recycled leather that I would get from old leather jackets that get imported here, generally from Europe and the States, and then taking them apart and lining the bags with more traditional African fabric to give it the flair of the colorful fabric that you find in these parts of the world, but also the more conservative, more western I would say, traditional bags that someone would carry.

Hugh: You did an interesting thing because a lot of people would start a business by themselves, you went a different route, you looked for a local partner?

Zoe: I think the whole reason that this came to fruition was all because of my friend Ruth who I work with on the bags. Ruth is a designer here in Kenya, she's born and raised in Kenya, but then she spent some time in Italy where she was studying leather handbag design. And Ruth primarily designs clothing here in Kenya, but she also does a little bit of work with leather as well. I had gone to Ruth when I first moved here because I wanted a blazer that was black on the outside and then [kitenge](#), which is fabric that you find here, on the inside. So you'll see that there is a theme, I have this theme where I like plain things on the outside and fun things on the inside, it's like my own version. [laughter].

So after my friend Allison pushed me on the idea with the bag, the end of that story was Allison said, "Zoe make five bags. Just try making bags, see how they come out, and I promise I will buy one of the bags." And I would like to say that did hold to her word.



Hugh: But she didn't?

Zoe: She did, she bought one like she said. So I went to Ruth and I started talking about this idea with her, and she got excited about it, and she immediately knew of all of these people to connect me to. She knew a supplier in the largest market here who could get me the leather jackets, she even knew the lady who could get me used zippers, because my bags also use recycled zippers that come in on jackets that get to Gikomba, the largest secondhand market here, and people take them apart and sell the different pieces of the jackets sometimes too. So I have a woman for the zippers.

She was able to tell me where to find the best fabric. She also supplies me with a lot of the fabric, because I try to use scrap fabric for the inside of my bags as much as possible, and most of that scrap is coming from the leftovers of the clothes that she makes. She is down to the details of where I can print business cards for the best price, she is there. And not only is she good for connecting me with people, but she also brings to the table this knowledge of handbags design that I really don't have. I liked to make bags when I was in high school with my mom's sewing machine, that were all cloth. So I know how to sew, besides that I know the aesthetics that I like, and I know the colors of fabrics that I like, and the different textures of leather that I like, but I am by no means an expert in handbags design. But Ruth is. So [Zoko Bags](#) would never exist if it wasn't for Ruth.

The other thing is that when I have frustrating moments, when there is a glitch in production, or when things aren't running smoothly – and believe me things hardly ever run smoothly – I can go to Ruth and I can vent to her and she is also my support system. She understands where I am coming from, she's always offering me solutions, she also just lets me complain to her, and she complains back to me about things sometimes, so we have a mutual understanding there. She is really fabulous.



Hugh: Is she a business partner in the sense that she owns part of the business with you, or is she a business partner in the sense that you work very closely together?

Zoe: In that we work very closely together. There are different parts of the production line where sometime she helps me and sometimes she doesn't. So when she helps me we have a revenue share model that we stick to. Because that was something else that was really important to me that this becomes something that's beneficial to everyone involved, and the idea for me is that this is not a charity anywhere along the production line. I'm not buying jackets from the guys in the market because I feel bad – I don't want to say that – but I never feel like I'm doing someone a favor and I don't ever want to feel like someone is doing me a favor, like we're trying to produce a good product at the end, and I want the consumer to be happy with the product. And there fore I want everyone along the value chain to be adding value, and then being compensated for that.

Hugh: Tell me a little bit about you production chain. You mentioned you've had a couple of problems recently.

Zoe: I think I have one of the most labor intensive production chains I have ever. My business is incredibly small right now, which means that it's a lot of hand-on work for me. So I start by calling John, who's my leather guy in Gikomba, and I tend to warn him the day before I'm going so that he can go and get a new bail of jackets to open for me. So I head down to the market which, depending on traffic – and Nairobi traffic can be terrible – can take anywhere between 40 minutes to two hours. And then when I get to the market I physically jump in a pile of jackets and start going through the jackets, and that's something that I think both John and I have gotten better at.

At first I needed a lot of help from Ruth for recommendations as to what leather would be best for bags, what's most durable, what would be easier to sew, and what wouldn't work. I'm also pretty particular about what colors I like and what textures I like. I understand more the engineering



element, I would say, behind it. Now John understands more my aesthetics. So I went last week and I was in and out of his stall in like 20 minutes, which is record time for us, and it's because he knows now which jackets to hand me.

And then from there I go next door to Rose, who's the woman I buy zippers from, and I try to get as many zippers from her as I can at a time. And then I bring everything either back to Ruth's studio or back to my apartment where I start taking apart the jackets. I have to take out the lining from the jackets. And then I start thinking about the design. I tend to make bags in batches, let's I have 20 jackets I try to lay all the jackets out and think if I want to make bags with two colors or one color and what different leathers will fit together, and then I start tracing up the patterns that we have for tote bags and for clutch bags. I cut the patterns once I've traced them out, and then I assemble them— But I don't assemble them, I then group together the leather, the zipper, and then I choose the lining, and I cut the lining that I'm going to use, and I put all of those in bags, and then those bags I take to the person who is sewing the bags for me. Currently I'm working with a woman who has three different leather tailors who work for her, and they then sew the bags for me.

The issue that I'm running into now is in the details. The finishing of these bags are really important to me, and sometimes getting those details right is really difficult. I realize that I give the tailors a difficult job, no one wants to work with used leather, it's harder to sew, it's more unpredictable, the weight of the leather is all different, which means you have to change the tension constantly in your machine. And so those are still some of the things that we're working on, because I would say I'm very particular about what I want the end product to look like. And if it's a little off, I don't feel comfortable selling that to my clients. Especially when people are now placing orders with me, because I've put up a website, so they place a specific order with and I don't want to send off to them a product that I feel is substandard. So we're trying to figure out now those things of how to try



to make this very unique, very hand-made product as much like assembly line when it comes to the actual sewing as possible.

Hugh: Yeah, and you're in the fashion business, so being particular is important. Have there been any advantages of running your own business in terms of your life in Nairobi and in terms of the experiences you've had that you wouldn't have had if you'd just been an expat working for Catholic Relief Services?

Zoe: Oh definitely. I would say this story that I told of the line of production, when I go into Gikomba I am the only foreigner in the section of the market that I go to. I'm sure there are foreigners at other parts of this market, but this market is like a small city. I go to one very particular section where they sell leather jackets, and the experiences I have in there really some day they make me smile, some day they freak me out a little bit, some days they make me laugh. But more than anything it's the people I meet when I'm in there who are for the most part most friendly and interested people. Recently I was trying to get more in-depth stories about both Rose who supplies me with zippers, and John who supplies me with leather, just about their lives and how they started selling there, and I ended up sitting down with Rose for like an hour and a half as she told me the story of her life. She was pointing to her son and telling me about her son. And to be able to spend the time to sit down with people in a different country, in a different continent, people that are brought up in a totally different culture, that's something that for me is one of the perks of living in a different country. That is why I am drawn to living overseas and working in different countries.

I think often when you sit in a big office you forget about the world that you're living in and you forget about the country you're living in, and the individual stories of the people who are surrounding you. And you often work with a lot of other foreigners who all have wonderful stories too and are super interesting individuals. But they have very different lives than the lives of people who are working in the informal markets here, like Gikomba.



Hugh: Yeah, I can truly say that.

Zoe: The other thing that I would add that Ruth has really exposed me to is the art community here, which I am still like a fake trying to slip into. But there is a really vibrant visual art, design, music, theatre world here, and it seem to me – I never know if it's because I'm just starting to understand it more or if it's really growing – but it's really exciting to meet the people and those worlds to see what they produce, to hear their music, to talk with them. I was at this event the other night where people were talking about unwritten histories, and there were artists' impressions of histories that aren't written down, and it was going from film-making to visual art to story-telling. I went because Ruth invited me to go to it. So I really appreciate that too.

Hugh: So this is your first business. Did you ever think that you'd start a business?

Zoe: I don't think I ever thought about whether I'd start a business, but I guess the answer is no. I think even if you'd have asked me two years ago when I was in graduate school and a lot of my friends were talking about how they would rather start their own business, I never thought that I was someone like that, I would rather work for somebody else and follow a straight path. But it took me getting really excited about something and also a business where it would give me an outlet for my more creative side that really inspired me to go for it.

Hugh: Have there any things about running the business that have particularly surprised you in terms of the experiences or challenges you've had.

Zoe: I find that to really promote your business you have to be a really good self-promoter. For example, when I first moved here and I saw Ruth and how that made her really uncomfortable, but I thought her products were great, I was like, no, come on, you have to upscale your products, you're fabulous, you have to talk about how fabulous your products are. And now I realize



how it's much easier to say that than to do that. In a lot of ways it makes me very self-conscious, like every bag is a reflection of me. And if each bag is not perfect that means I am not perfect. [laughs] And you really are exposing yourself to people when you're putting all of this thought and effort, and your business becomes like your baby, it's no longer just your job that you go to and leave at the end of the day. But you go to sleep thinking about it, you wake up thinking about it. I don't know, I never thought that it would consume me like that.

Hugh: You are currently supporting yourself not through that business but through the work that you do for a mobile tech company. Do you think that it could get to the point where it would support you and you'd spend all of your time on it?

Zoe: I would probably get to a crossroads where I will have to decide. Currently the model that I'm using is not a scalable model. So unless I am going to charge an exuberant amount for each bag I don't think it would really support me. Something that I have thought about and that I toss around with Ruth is that if in the future we could somehow combine forces with the different things we do, where she takes the more creative side and I take the business side, I think that could be something that could become more of a fulltime job. But currently I think I'm just trying to test out the system to see if this could be something scalable, regardless of whether it would be by myself or with somebody else. Because I think so much of that, at least here in Kenya, is based on your individual relationships with the people who you work with to ensure that you get the quality of product that you'd want at the end.

Hugh: Who are your customers at the moment? You mentioned launching a website which will definitely give a plug too. Are your customers outside of Kenya or within Kenya?

Zoe: I would say it's a mix. When I started off, for the first few months I was doing this and I didn't have website at all, and I showcased some of my stuff at one of the malls here in Nairobi and that's how I got my first



customer base. Now that I have a website, I would say it's a 50-50 split between people here in Nairobi, for the most part who are foreign, and then people back in the States. I'm very excited, I've sent a few of my bags off to Switzerland. I had a request to send my bags to Southern Africa. I successfully got one to Swaziland. I'm having issues with some of the other places, but mostly right now it's between the US and Kenya.

Hugh: I have to say I have looked at your bags, I think they're really cool. And this is a good opportunity for you to tell us about your website and how people might be able to order online.

Zoe: My website Zokobags.squarespace.com. You can take a look around the website, what I try to do on the website is walk you through a little bit of the experience of what Zoko Bags is, from going to the market and getting the materials to then cutting the stuff apart. I have a blog on the website too, and with photo I had friends helping me pack bags the other weekend. And then I also have examples of my bags. So the thing about my bags is that they're all unique, so it's not plain and click kind of website, where you can order there, but on the Contact Us page it does walk you through how to order a bag. So giving me general specs of whether you want a tote or a clutch, whether you want a black bag, a brown bag or colored bag, colors, it's hard for me to tell you what colors I have. And then once you order them I send you photos of the bags that are currently available or I put you in my database to send you photos as soon as I have something along the lines of what you want.

So currently it's very easy for me to get bags to people in Kenya. Bags get to the States only about once every month or two, because that process just takes a little bit longer. And then countries outside of the US and Kenya we enter into a conversation about how exactly we're going get that bag to you.

Hugh: [laughs] So they're definitely hand-made, lovingly hand-made?

Zoe: Exactly.



Hugh: Tell me, you've been in Nairobi for how long now?

Zoe: I've been here for a year and a half.

Hugh: I imagine that since it was your first time in Africa, there was some culture shock involved with moving there?

Zoe: There was. I had started going overseas a lot when I was 16. So maybe there was less culture shock than if I had never spent much time overseas. But I guess opposite shock for me here was that no one honks their horns, that the traffic is really really terrible. I have never sat in traffic like I have in Nairobi. For example I lived in the Caribbean a little bit, whenever there is a little bit of traffic everyone is just blasting their horns and screaming out of the windows, and here people sit pretty patiently. The traffic though is definitely something that I think that has been a shock to me.

Hugh: Give people a sense, because there is something about traffic in big cities in developing countries that is just so awful to be in, and it's everywhere, you just can't travel effectively across big cities in developing countries by car. Is there a story or description you've got of how frustrating it can be and how long it takes to get to places?

Zoe: The office that I go to generally for work now, if I were to go between my house and the office at 10 o'clock at night it would take me 10 minutes. If I go between 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning, it can take me up to an hour and a half. And you just sit there, and I think one of the most infuriating things is the buses here, the mini-buses, which they call matatus, they weave in and out of traffic, they cut people off, they drive on the wrong side of the street, they drive on the sidewalk when there are pedestrians walking on them. So not only are you sitting in traffic but sitting in traffic kind of makes you hate people sometimes.

Hugh: [laughs] Always. In every country I've ever waited.



Zoe: It takes you like ten times longer than it should to get somewhere, and then you arrive and you're in a terrible mood. And I will say the smog is pretty bad in traffic here too, so you're also sitting there, even if the windows are down, inhaling this, or just feeling like you're in your own little trapped box, because all your windows are up too.

Hugh: And it's pretty hot.

Zoe: Actually my plug for Nairobi is that the weather here is perfect. But when the sun is out in the middle of the day it gets pretty hot, but it's not humid here. So I can't actually complain about the weather.

Hugh: And you were there for the terrorist attacks on the mall?

Zoe: I was. I was actually living right around the corner from Westgate, the mall where there were the attacks in September, which was an incredibly tragic time here in Kenya for many many reasons. How it affected me was just a sense of insecurity that I have never felt before, and despite living in different countries I had always lived in relatively safe other countries, and terrorism isn't something that you can even protect yourself against. People call Nairobi 'Nairobbery', and luckily nothing has ever happened to me, but I'm very cautious I would say. Generally I don't walk anywhere at night, I try not to have flashy things on me, I don't take my iPhone out and wave it around either. But something like terrorism you can't protect yourselves against. How it affected everybody here individually was really hard.

And then the other thing that was hard was the response that you saw of the Kenyan forces, and that it took them four days to bring everything under control, and that was an uncoordinated response by both the police and the military. And then there was a lot of reporting afterwards of all the looting that had gone on in the mall by the military and police, and that's why they think maybe it took so long to get the situation under control,



because people were in there trying to break into the jewelry stores, stealing from the grocery stores, instead of trying to save the lives of people who were trapped in there.

Hugh: In relation to you feeling safe, Nairobi does have a reputation for being unsafe, whether that is justified or not I don't know, does that affect your quality of life at all?

Zoe: I think it's something that I now just think about more than I ever really thought about it before. You just become aware of your surroundings more. I also think on the flipside of that one of the things I love about doing my bags and going to the places I go is that for getting some of my supplies I go to places that are not 'safest neighborhoods', but you realize when you go there that people are incredibly friendly, and 99% of the people there are wonderful people who are just trying to make it in life and just trying to live their lives, they're not out there to rob you or to do any harm to you.

I think Nairobi is a really segregated city where the slums, the middle class neighborhoods, the wealthier neighborhoods are all pretty segregated from each other. So you can really live your life here without ever confronting the reality that a lot of people live in here, and then kind of vilifying the other, whether it be the other who has a lot of money, or the other who has no money and is therefore definitely going to rob you – which is not true. So I think that is also really important in living in a city like this to be aware of that.

Hugh: I think that's a good point, because there is a lot of crime in a lot of American cities, there is a lot of crime in a lot of developed countries, but I think when people who haven't traveled or they have traveled a little bit but never lived in a developing country city, when they think of it they think it's unsafe. What I hear you saying is if you're smart it's not necessarily more risky than living in a big city in a developed country.



Zoe: And I also find people here more helpful and friendlier than in most American cities that I've ever been to. People are much more willing to go out of their way for you, or offer you help if you look a little bit lost somewhere, or even just asking small questions about how your family is doing, people are super friendly here.

Hugh: So what are the future plans for Zoe Cohen?

Zoe: For now I want to stay in Kenya, I really like it here. I want to continue to work on my bag line, continue figuring out the problems and working out the kinks so that we get our production line running even more smoothly. I think regardless of how my business goes, and how my other mobile communication work I'm doing goes, I think I just want to continue using this creative space that I have opened up for myself in a different country and explain that with myself. Because I find it really exciting. It challenges me, but it exposes me to really great people and new experiences that I find so super fulfilling's.

Hugh: What I like about your story is that you're using fulltime work as a means to support yourself, and you no doubt enjoy that fulltime work, but at the same time you are doing your own thing and figuring out whether that own thing could have eventually be your fulltime pursuit and fulltime passion. I think that's really smart because you don't need to starve figuring it out and working on the business so that it can scale.

Zoe: Let's hope that it can scale.

Hugh: But in figuring it out you won't go starving. So Zoe this has been really great. I think you've got a really interesting story. And I think you really nicely talked about the things that mean a lot to you in Nairobi. So thank you for sharing that.

Zoe: All right, take care.

Hugh: Awesome, thank you Zoe.



And that's a wrap for this podcast. You can find more information on the links that Zoe mentioned on the website through which she sells her handbags and clutches at www.hughwhalan.com/podcasts. I will have all the show notes, all the links, all the latest info there. Please don't forget if you've enjoyed this podcast leave me your review, good or bad, I appreciate your feedback regardless, on iTunes. When you get to my blog make sure you subscribe my newsletter. That will keep you up to speed with all the latest podcasts, articles, tips and resources, everything you could ever want to become a destination entrepreneur. And obviously stay tuned because we've a lot more interesting stories coming up.

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