



## She's a Mom and an Online Attorney for Influencers

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**Guest:** Brittany Ratelle

**Shelley Hunter:** You're listening to the *Faithful Career Moves* podcast. I'm your host, Shelley Hunter. This is where we talk to people who have seen the hand of God in their lives and, particularly, in their careers.

Welcome to Episode 41 of the *Faithful Career Moves* podcast. Here's something I love about the work I do. I get to meet many inspirational women who are doing a myriad of things to develop their talents, take care of their families, serve others, and lean into what God is guiding them to do.

Unfortunately, women still face criticism for being working or non-working moms. As a result, I'm seeing young women increasingly frustrated by that and sometimes even questioning their faith. Despite broad general statements, I believe there's no one right way to be a mom or a woman of faith. Many moms stay home, many work, many do a little or a lot of both. I genuinely don't care what path women take, I just want to encourage you to make it a matter of personal revelation. For now, I think the best way to do that is for me to share stories of faithful women who've seen the hand of God in their careers in whatever those decisions might be.

Today, I'm thrilled to have you meet Brittany Ratelle. She's an attorney who found a niche that is a blend of her talents, education, and interests, and it allows her to support her family, serve others, and build up God's kingdom here on earth. Really, this is the quintessential example of what this podcast is all about. I first asked Brittany to tell us what it is she does for a living.

**Brittany Ratelle:** I am an attorney, and I help online business owners. Creatives, creators, that's who I help. I help them set up, and scale, and protect their businesses.

**Shelley:** How did you get into that niche?

**Brittany:** That is a great question. I fell into it. I went to law school, felt called like I was supposed to go to law school. I was considering lots of other paths in terms of graduate school. After I graduated, I got some good advice from mentors at the time that were like, "Even if you're not sure if you want to practice full time, sit for the bar,

be prepared," and so I did. I had a newborn baby at the time to spend a lot of time in my daughter's nursery. [laughter] Just me and BARBRI. Just luckily, she was a great baby. It was really hard, it was stressful, but I'm so glad I did it with a two-month-old versus any other time in my life with kids. It would've been impossible.

I felt like, "Maybe I could do family law and maybe some estate planning. They're practice areas that I had seen modeled. I had done an externship in law school, so I was familiar with what those looked like. You didn't really have to have a lot of support staff for those. It wasn't the same as litigation or document review or a lot of other practices that needed a lot more structure and setup. You could be a one-man, one-woman shop and do more reasonable client work as you wanted to at scale, and so I had decided I would do that. I just let people know I was doing that, and I got enough business just to keep it at a simmer really.

I called myself a nap-time attorney, [laughter] and that's what I was for many years. I was just a nap-time attorney and a nighttime attorney, and I can get my cousin across the street to watch my baby attorney for a few hours to get some work done. It felt nice to use my degree, and I learned some things and there were some really hard things. Family law particularly is very emotionally challenging and very emotionally draining because your clients are in crisis all the time, and you are just trying to be Steady Eddy and be a rock and trying to de-escalate situations.

Honestly, I felt like more of the time, I was a therapist than I was-- A totally unlicensed, unqualified therapist more than an attorney, because I'd be like, "Really, what it seems like is everyone needs help with their feelings here because everyone's grieving and angry and you see that play out in the courts, in the legal system as a tool, but this is just a symptom and a reaction to what's underlying, what people are feeling and trying to process and deal with." Anyway, lots of challenges there.

In the meantime, some bright spots where I had these friends from school, a lot of them that were in my peer group, LDS women who were bright, successful, and talented, also trying to figure out how were they going to mesh their careers in with growing a family, with maybe having to move around and follow a husband as they were in the whole dental law school, grad school, MBA, med school journeys.

They were bloggers, and they were really talented and good at telling stories and chronicling lifestyles. They were the very early successful bloggers, and really opened the door to that as a career path or just getting more notoriety because there were a couple really famous LDS bloggers. Some of these friends were starting to turn these into real businesses and really become the first influencers. They were starting to host events, and sell their own products or sell other people's products, and just make money, and start to hustle and figure stuff out.

I kept on getting questions like, "Hey Brittany, I know you don't do this, but can you help me set up an LLC?" I was like, "Yes, I can help you." "Hey Brittany, I know you don't do this, but I've got this contract, and I don't know what it says and I'm going to sign it. I tried to take it to my dad's friend who's an attorney or my uncle, but he doesn't know anything about Instagram, he doesn't know anything about blogging,

he doesn't even understand what this deal is and what I'd be signing or giving up." I'm like, "Yes, I understand that world, so I'll take a look at it."

That's really how it started was really just organically. Then it morphed from there into really becoming now, it's a full-time practice. I own my own firm. I've been practicing law-- I graduated law school in 2011, but I've been in this kind of niche full time now for seven years.

**Shelley:** Wow. It's so amazing to me, this is something I've been writing a lot about lately is the evolution. When you were growing up, did you have entrepreneurial thoughts, dreams?

**Brittany:** Yes, I think I did. My dad is, I would say, a quasi-entrepreneur. He worked in media acquisitions. He was in a small three-person firm that specialized in doing radio merger deals in the '90s. He was a businessman. He wasn't an attorney, although he could have been, and loves deal-making, negotiation, putting things together, working a room. Those are his skills. I got to see a lot of that in action. A lot of just even those soft skills of my dad would always talk to us about, "Here's how you excel at a job, and here's the question behind the question that you need to be answering, and here's how you need to think about it from their perspective." Those are all things that I learned. I thought every family learned that at the dinner table. [laughter] The art of the deal-making.

Then my mom's a true creative. My mother is a very talented seamstress, and event planner, she's done professional costuming. She just lives in that creative zone and is very at ease, and just thinks that she can figure out anything, and honestly, she can.

I like to think of myself as a nice blend between those two. Growing up, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but I know I love to read, I love to write. I was a pretty creative thinker and problem-solver. I really liked being with people, I was an extrovert, and so I studied Communications and PR at BYU.

Then, as I was finishing undergrad, I was like, "I'm not quite sure what I want to do." I actually went and worked and did marketing for a law firm in Salt Lake. It was a really great experience because it taught me a lot about the practice of law, what it looked like being at a firm, marketing looked like and how that was changing. We had a website, but it was very basic. I remember still trying to get people to do their Yellow Pages ads. [laughter]

I remember even then asking, I was like, "Are we sure this is a good use of our resources?" They're like, "This is what our competitors do." I'm like, "That's not a good question about whether we should be spending, whether it's what our competitors do, the question is, is this where our clients are? Is this what's helping them make good choices of selecting their lawyer?"

That was the fresh college kid with their one class of marketing thinking that they knew what was what, right?

**Shelley:** [laughs] Yes.

**Brittany:** It also taught me some really important things about, I saw attorneys that were very successful, highly regarded in their field, making very good money, very unhappy. Especially some of the LDS attorneys and especially, the women LDS attorneys who had beautiful cars in the parking lot, nice house up in Park City, juggling their multiple nannies and what that looked like and how it was supposed to be work-life friendly. It was a bit of a myth if they were going to make partner.

That was eye-opening that I was like, "Okay, still interested in law school, but don't want to do this, so I can cross this off my list of things that I think would be a good fit for me in terms of my partnership and my marriage with my spouse," but I was still interested in law school.

Then what cinched the deal for me was really a formative experience in my last internship of undergrads, I worked for the state department overseas in Mozambique. I spent a summer, like two months working there, and there were tons of ex-attorneys all around. Of course, they all would ask the intern, "What are you doing? What are your plans?" I was like, "Well, first of all, I'm in love with this boy, and I'm super homesick. As happy as I am to be here, or going on an adventure, or seeing a sunset on a catamaran, I was super mopey. For the first time in my life, I was homesick, but for a person."

I was like, "I think I'm in love with him. I think he's the one for me, so I have to figure that out. That's a very new thing for me to think about my life is going to have to be molded around another person and I'm not just going to be on my own jet ski."

My husband and I talk about this analogy a lot of, when you're alone, you can have your own jet ski, but then when you get married, you both have to be on one jet ski. [chuckles] You do have to decide what it's going to look like together.

As I said, "Maybe I'm going to do public health or public policy, and I'm just really interested in helping women and children and maybe using my gifts and talents there. I thought maybe that's where my heavenly parents were guiding me towards." They were all like, "Don't go get those degrees. Go to law school, people will take you seriously. You will get good reading and writing, critical-reasoning skills, and you can do anything. You can practice or not practice. You can go work for a nonprofit, you can go join the foreign service. Those are all paths."

That was really helpful advice. That coupled with lot of thinking, a lot of prayers, I really got a strong answer that I was supposed to go to law school and that Heavenly Father is basically saying, "I know you don't know what that will look like and what that will look like having a family and being with Michael, but just stay with me here. It will unfold in time, be patient with the process."

**Shelley:** If you get your law degree, you don't actually have to practice to keep it current?

**Brittany:** Once you pass the bar, if you want to stay an active member of the bar, you need to be practicing, and then you could go inactive status. I didn't want to do inactive status, so I was like, "No, I want to be practicing and doing something, and I'm going to pay for malpractice insurance, so that's an expense." Plus, I thought, there's a chance that we might be moving back up to our hometown someday in Coeur d'Alene in Idaho, and I really didn't want to sit for another bar.

The only way around that is that you have to be practicing active enough that you can waive into another state and get reciprocity, and so that balance tipped it, and I was like, "No, I'm going to keep my head down and do something, and keep using this and figuring it out and keep being open to experiences, to inspiration. I'm going to pray about this every general conference," which I did for years. "Is the path I'm on right? Is there anything else I'm missing? Is there anything else I'm supposed to be doing with these gifts and talents that you've given me? Is there something else I'm supposed to be doing with them to help build the kingdom? To help you, to help women, to help children?"

I thought that was where my path was going to lead me.

In a weird, funny way, it does now. Not like I thought, but almost all my clients today are women, and I'm helping them build their dreams, and helping them start nonprofits, employ people, build businesses, solve problems, and create agencies and media empires, and it helps lift their families and then all of the other people they touch. I did end up helping whom I thought I helped, just not in a way that I could see from where I was sitting then.

**Shelley:** Yes, totally. Before I ask you the questions that I ask my guests, I want to ask for advice. For you, I'm going to ask it two different ways. First, you've worked with all these entrepreneurs. What advice would you want to give to them?

**Brittany:** Something that I usually repeat with clients as they're starting their entrepreneurial journey is, as you're starting to think about what you want to offer and what you want to do, I like to think of three circles in a Venn diagram. One of them will be things that you like to do. The skills that you like to do. What do you like to do? Do you like to read? Do you like to talk? Do you like to sell things? Do you like to explain things? Do you like to make things with your hands? What do you like to do?

The other one; things that you are good at doing, which sometimes are what you like to do, but sometimes there's some nuance there that's important to explore. That's why it's good to be introspective. You can always ask a trusted friend, "What am I good at? When am I in my zone of genius? When do I feel powerful? When do I have those highlights in my life where I really feel like I'm digging into stuff I'm good at?" That's going to be in that second Venn diagram.

Then the third, it's really important, is what problem people will pay money to solve? [chuckles] You want to start a business, ideally, if there's a point in between all three of those where it intersects. Again, that third one is what is a problem that people will pay money to solve? Because I've especially seen this that can help, and I think it's

women's strengths being misused as weaknesses, and that a lot of women say like, "I want to help other women. I want to help build a community and help maybe because I was at home and I had postpartum problems, or I was struggling with this and I wanted this, and I want to build that." That's amazing, and that's a wonderful space, and I hope we have more people who help with that.

We also need to be specific on what is the problem that you're solving that people will pay money to solve? If we want to build a business, we need to make money, we need to make friends with money, we need to not be weird about money, and it needs to be sustainable because this is going to take a lot of time and effort. If it's something that you're going to make the conscious choice of, let's be honest about what that needs to look like for it to be useful. Otherwise, you might be best served using your skills to work for someone else, and there are great jobs out there and great organizations out there. That's where I like to usually start with people is find that spot in the Venn diagram between all three of those circles.

**Shelley:** That's perfect. Then, advice for somebody who wants to do something similar to what you are doing.

**Brittany:** Someone who wants to be a lawyer like me, online lawyer. Funny, I've had a couple of girls in my local church congregation who've been shadowing me for their senior project, so they've asked me many of these questions. I would say, if you like to read and you like to write (because that's a lot of what my job is—reading and writing) and then talking to people and being able to summarize things, then think it's good to get a good handle on what are how you want to differentiate yourself?

There is some disruption of pushback against traditional big law and models and certainly, tech is pushing against it. AI is scaring us all that they're coming for our jobs. I don't think we need to be fearful about that, but I think we need to be realistic that yes, there are some lower-level administrative, clerical, really data-driven tasks that don't need to be done by attorneys. Some of that work will be taken over by technology, and so I think it's good to think about, "What could you offer, and what do you want to be helping people as part of that process? Do you like the idea of being in court, and do you like public speaking, and having periods of a lot of preparation, and then that high conflict, and do you handle that well? Then maybe a litigator, you would like doing that.

If you like more dealing with documents and helping people assess risk and doing stuff on the front end so that they avoid the shadow of the courthouse, that's more transactional law. That's what I do in my practice. Taking some introspection of what you would maybe be interested in law, I think it's a really good idea to go either work for a law firm, go intern there, go shadow, and see what you think about the practice because law school's an investment. It's three extra years on top of your undergrad. For some schools, it could be a significant investment of money. There's some pushback whether law schools need to be more honest and transparent about job prospects and debt and what that looks like after. I'm glad because we need that and make sure that it's a worthwhile investment, and you're not setting yourself up with a millstone around your neck.

**Shelley:** The whole point of this podcast is to say, okay, of all those things you said, it's really a matter of prayer and talking to Heavenly Father and saying, "Okay, I think I want to do this. Help guide me there." I love that you felt, go here. I don't know the outcome yet, but I do feel like I should go here.

**Brittany:** Yes, I definitely felt led along and prompting. I could even see afterwards, as I was doing family law and estate planning, I kept asking those questions, the Lord was moving things in my life. I had a good friend of mine who is a graphic designer, Melanie Burke, who knew a lot of these same creative friends. I'd done a few legal projects for her and she was like, "You know what? I'm listening to this podcast. I think you love it. It's just opening my eyes of this online business world and online course world, it's called-- By Pat Flynn. You should start listening to it." I was like, "Sure," so I dug in and did--

That was my introduction to the Pat Flynn,, and the Amy Porterfield, and the Marie Forleo, who are the-- Seth Godin, these huge thought leaders in online marketing. I'm so grateful that she told me about that and opened my eyes to this industry and this potential, and got me really excited and energized where I was thinking, "You know what? I think this is actually, exactly what I want to be doing. I want to be helping women here."

Praying about that, and I got that confirmation, and I thought, "Awesome. I feel so great about that. Now I just have to send out this one really scary email," [laughter] which is you send out the email to everyone in your contact list and you're like, "I'm this now, I'm declaring it."

You feel like Michael Scott in *The Office* where he is like, "I declare bankruptcy."

You're like, "I am a lawyer who helps business owners and creatives." I'm like, "I don't even know what to call myself. Are these people creatives? Are they entrepreneurs, influencers? Do they like that term?" I sent that scary email out, and I got my first business from there, and I was like, "Okay, I have an Instagram now. I'm just going to answer questions, and just provide value, and we're going to see where that takes you."

**Shelley:** It's amazing. Can you tell me about a leap of faith? Maybe you just did. Can you tell me about a leap of faith you had to take?

**Brittany:** Yes. That was a really big leap of faith for me to do that and to just put myself out there. That was really scary for me because I'm an Enneagram 3. I like words of affirmation. I want to be thought of as respected and smart and proficient and doing something new like that where I had all the imposter syndrome in my head of like, "Who are you? You didn't take a lot of business law classes, you didn't study and work with a big firm for several years ago. Are you even qualified to help?"

I had to do a lot of internal work on that, and really get to my knees and be humbled and I'm like, "Is this okay? Is this right? Am I crazy or is this a safe step moving forward?"

It's not like I expect the Lord to tell me, "Oh yes, you'll be for sure, and you won't have any problems, and you'll make good money," because I don't think those were fair questions to ask but, "Is this the next right move for me? Is this something that would be good use of my skills?" I got a resounding yes. That really helped me a lot to move forward with that.

Hindsight on the other side of it, I'm just so grateful for the people, and the books, and the podcasts, and other pieces that were put in my path to help me to figure it out along the way.

**Shelley:** I love it. What is an unexpected blessing? Something you just couldn't see for yourself in making this move?

**Brittany:** I would say the community of women that I've found online. I have such a rich network now of friends who are clients and clients who are friends. Most of my clients become my friends. [chuckles] If not one way or the other. Some people that I've never even met in person, but I consider that we're very close and we share and we boost each other up and we know a lot about each other's businesses and families and whatnot.

Then a lot of women I have been able to connect with in person at events, at conferences, at retreats, or whatnot, but because of, again, that blessing of the internet, and I know there are ills and downsides to the internet and to social media, but one plus side for me has been the community that I've been able to be part of, even though I live in a small town in northern Idaho. I'm not limited to who can be in my village of women, who can be trying to use their skills to support their families, to support their dreams, to support what they can in their circle, to build God's kingdom looking forward, even if that's selling baby blankets. That might be what they're called to do, and I just feel really grateful to be part of that village.

**Shelley:** That's beautiful. How have you seen the hand of God in your career?

**Brittany:** All over. I don't know how I cannot see the hand of God from just leading me, and the things that I learned at a young age, and from debate to being led to law school, and then, I fell into this really great steady group in law school that helped me tremendously. In fact, one of my close friends in that study group, she passed away last year from cancer really suddenly. It was just such a blessing to be able to think of the time we were able to spend together and talk.

There's not a lot of women in law school, and they're getting better, especially they're really trying at BYU to up their numbers, so it was always really special to have that kinship and that connection. Those relationships to ones that I found in the creative community at Utah and Provo and beyond, I'm just so grateful for because I know that there weren't any mistakes there.

There's people who've been able to find me and find me at the right time when they really needed help or when they were really at an inflection point in their business. I'm so grateful that I could be there for them, and that I've done their preparation to be ready, and that I showed up in a way that that led it so they could find me and



they could get my name from someone. I just see the hand of God all over that and being able to do good things as we're put into motion. There's momentum there, then He can use all those tools for His good.

**Shelley:** Yes. Thank you for being on this show with me.

**Brittany:** Yes. Thank you so much Shelley for having me. I don't always find ways that I can talk about faith with my professional interest, but for me, they're so intertwined. I'm just grateful that I was raised with a perspective that could see that and be humbled by that and be awed by that of that's how great God is, is that you can use ordinary things in our lives and other people to be the answers to our prayer.

**Shelley:** Amazing. I love this interview and these are my takeaways, as well as a thesis that I'm working on, every woman I've interviewed on this podcast has experienced the same career evolution. Though the paths and the destinations are actually different. It starts with personal development and it ends with a divinely inspired career that feels miraculous and perfectly timed. The spoiler alert is it never actually ends. Instead, we're always somewhere on the path in multiple areas of our lives simultaneously, whether we realize it or not.

As we partner with God in making career decisions, we discover He's constantly preparing us for what's next. Though this pattern also applies to men, women face the additional challenge of deciding if, when, and how to incorporate motherhood. I'll describe the pattern as though it's linear, but it's not. It's overlapping and iterative. In other words, you don't arrive, but if you're wondering how to find that thing you're uniquely called to do, this is the process.

First, there's personal preparation and your personal development. This is the things you like to do, the skills, your interests, your aptitudes, even your education. The things that you are just naturally drawn to doing. Second is professional development. That's the part where you take this out into the world, you're testing it, you're getting good at it, you're even failing and learning things about yourself, gaps in your education, things you want to pursue.

When you get to the sweet spot of your passions and interests, plus your development, you find, and this is the third step, that you're serving others. You actually become so excellent at what you do that you can't help but serve others. It's the kind of thing that when people say, "Oh my gosh, you're so good at that," that you tend to say, "Oh, it's nothing." Really, it's just that you are so good at because it aligns with your passions, and interests, and your expertise.

Then it comes the impact. This is the fourth step is when you're making an impact. When you're that good, you're serving others, your sphere of influence actually increases in such a way that as followers of Christ, you have the ability to make a real impact on this world and in build up God's kingdom on this earth. I

I have to add here that nowhere have I said that this is financial. You can go through this entire process with a goal to create a non-profit, or serve in your community, be a really amazing missionary, a really great mom. There really are no rules here

because it all comes back to following God's will for you, His plan for your life, and you seeking His guidance in that.

Then, you repeat it, not because you purposely start over but because, like I said before, you're always evolving and always being prepared for what's next, so you don't actually arrive. What I've noticed in this podcast, though is that it can take a few iterations before you really see God's hand in the process. When you do, it's the full recognition that little things from your life have lined up. Once you see it, it's magical, and more importantly, it changes your career going forward exponentially.

I'll be talking more about this pattern in upcoming episodes, but for now, I just want to thank Brittany for sharing her journey and how she involved God every step of the way and recognized His involvement. I didn't understand how to get personal revelation until my late 30s, and I mean, really late 30s. Many things in my life for sure would be different had I known how to do that earlier, but God is good. I've still seen His guiding hand in my life, and I'm so thankful He didn't leave me when I had no idea He was there. Once I saw it, once I fully understood, everything changed. Brittany modeled that beautifully for me. I thank her for sharing her story, and I thank you for listening.

Thank you for spending time with me on the *Faithful Career Moves* podcast. I hope you will discover one story at a time that God cares deeply about the details of our lives, especially something as important as using our talents and abilities to support our families, serve others, and build up his kingdom on this earth. If you are a stay-at-home mom who feels inspired to stretch yourself professionally, visit [faithfulcareermoves.com](http://faithfulcareermoves.com) to learn more.