



When Donna Curtin was just six years old, she proudly announced to her family at the dinner table that she wanted to be a racecar driver. She distinctly remembers her mother saying to her 'you're not doing anything until you finish your peas!' And so began the story of Donna's entrepreneurial journey.

Fast forward a few years to junior high, where she was told by the school principal that 'girls don't take shop.' It's a phrase that would stick with her forever. It was her dream to take shop class—she wanted to build and create things. She was always very artistic and loved building things, and wouldn't let this be a roadblock. Donna ended up being the first girl in the history of the school to take an architectural illustration class, which she loved and excelled in. But it wasn't her passion—it wasn't cars.

She bought her first car—a 1970 Volkswagen—and a book about how to fix it. She restored the entire car herself, including the interior, exterior and engine. And she loved every minute of it. Donna was working in higher education at the time when one day during a conversation about her love for cars, a maintenance worker told her that she needed to just

'make up her mind and do it.' That was the moment she realized it was time to start working on opening her dream business—a body shop.

After years of planning, saving and researching the perfect location, she entered into an agreement to open a franchise. Costs began to rise and the franchise opportunity fell through. At this point, Donna had left her job and was working to make ends meet while trying to resurrect the business. A second franchise opportunity appeared, but only briefly. At this point she had secured a loan, was poised to buy the property and had determined all costs to build the shop. Her big break came through when she found a contractor willing to take a chance. Construction began and Donna's dream was coming to life.

Donna makes it a point to tell all of her new employees her personal mantra: "You can live your life in one of two ways. You can make it about your life—your family, your goals, and being a good person—or you can make your life about money. If you make your life about money, eventually all of the other stuff goes away." Donna has devoted her life to her dreams and to living to its fullest!

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*wise words
of wisdom...*

"If you're embarrassed
about failing, you're
never going to try."

-Donna Curtin

WISE HAPPENINGS:

**The Building Blocks
For Starting a Business**

September 4, 12:00 - 1:00PM
September 18, 5:30 - 7:00PM

**Free Online Tools
For Business Growth**

September 10, 12:00 - 1:00PM

**Women Working to Grow
a Business Roundtable**

September 17, 12:00 - 1:00PM

**Women in Creative
Businesses Roundtable**

September 19, 12:00 - 1:00PM

**Women in Food & Farming
Businesses Roundtable**

September 26, 12:00 - 1:00PM

**Save the Date: Money
Smart for Small Business**

October 5, 8:00AM - 4:00PM

A women's business center... run for women, by women.

All events, unless otherwise indicated, are held at the **WISE Women's Business Center @ The Tech Garden** // 235 Harrison Street // Syracuse, NY 13202

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