



Entrepreneurship has always been in Mary Schalk's blood. She grew up in a family of fourth-generation entrepreneurs. Creative by nature, Mary was given after school and summer art classes as a child. She pursued her passion and earned a degree in Fine Art from Syracuse University. After graduating from college, she worked briefly in fundraising for the Everson Museum that led to a management position with Public Television in Massachusetts.

Applying her creativity in a business arena, Mary excelled in fundraising, but longed to use her art and design skills more directly as an entrepreneur. Moving back to the area to be closer to family, she became a designer and salesperson for Stickleby, Audi & Co. "Stickleby was a great training ground for me in many ways," says Mary. From there, Mary launched her own design firm. While taking time off from her career to help with her ailing mother, Mary reevaluated her business and began to broaden her services to include garden design and outside décor to her repertoire as a reflection of a growing passion.

"I use my home and gardens as a laboratory," says Mary. "I am always trying new ideas – good landscaping begins at the driveway." When asked about the challenges of social media like Pinterest and DIY shows, Mary states "I try and stay ahead of the curve and work with today's market and changing client behavior."

Mary encourages new entrepreneurs to leverage their experiences to create a framework for building strategic partnerships. Business ownership can get lonely and thinking this way opens doors. She encourages start-ups to not lose sight of the "big picture" by getting caught up in day-to-day tasks. "Just keep moving forward," Mary says.

Now in a growth phase of her business, Mary has attended the SU Entrepreneur's Boot Camp and works closely with a counselor at the WISE Women's Business Center. She is focusing on creating and building her brand and ultimately taking her business to the next level. "I'm not interested in limitations," says Mary, "only possibilities."

PHOTO BY CINDY BELL PHOTOGRAPHY // PAGE DESIGN BY ISCA DESIGN STUDIO

*wise words
of wisdom...*

"Align yourself with strategic partners that are going to keep you moving forward."

- Mary Schalk

WISE HAPPENINGS:

► Check out wiseconference.com/events for a complete list of upcoming events!

The Building Blocks For Starting a Business

April 1, 12:00 - 1:00PM
April 30, 5:30 - 7:00PM

WISE Symposium at the Oncenter

April 8, 9:00AM - 5:30PM

Meet the Entrepreneur Series

April 15, 12:00 - 1:00PM

Accounting Insights for Established Entrepreneurs

April 22, 1:00 - 2:30PM

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
(315) 443-8634 // wisecenter@syr.edu // www.wisecenter.org // **FIND US ON:**  