



Entrepreneurship has always been in Kathy O'Connell's life plan. "Entrepreneurship is intrinsic to me," says Kathy when asked if she had always known she wanted to be a business owner. Following her passion to help others, Kathy realized she had an opportunity to share her experiences and encourage people to live their own lives to their fullest potential.

As a young person, Kathy had limited awareness of the struggles others with disabilities faced. "Even though I had a disability all of my life, I grew up in a loving and supportive household with educational opportunities and encouragement to pursue my dreams" Kathy says. "Many people with disabilities do not have that same opportunity." Earning two Master's degree the first in Rehabilitation Counseling and then in Inclusive Education, Kathy followed her dreams and started a business helping people with disabilities to live life as fully as they can.

In her business, Kathy combines her personal and professional experience to share how she worked through a lot of barriers to live the life she wanted, noting that "a disability

should not stop anyone from living the life they want." In addition to counseling and speaking engagements, Kathy recently penned her first book, *Firewalk: Embracing Different Abilities*, based on her own experiences. A self-help book, its theme touches on giving readers new perspectives and strategies for embracing all that life can offer, despite the challenges a disability may present.

Encouraged by a colleague urging her that 'it was time to reach more people,' Kathy recently decided to take the next step in growing her business by integrating a completely new vision and business model. Working with a counselor at the WISE Women's Business Center, she is in the process of transitioning from a business model based on counseling in a sole proprietorship to a business model that focuses on online training and empowerment sessions. She hopes to grow the business by adding employees and reach beyond the local community to national and international audiences.

"Working for myself is such an integral part of who I am," she says. "I love the freedom of being an entrepreneur."

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*wise words
of wisdom...*

"Develop a system for yourself
and how you're going to run
your business."

- Kathy O'Connell

WISE HAPPENINGS:

**The Building Blocks for
Starting a Business**

July 8, 12:00 - 1:00PM

**Accounting for Start-up
Entrepreneurs**

July 15, 1:00 - 2:30PM

Meet the Entrepreneur Series

July 17, 12:00 - 1:00PM

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

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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