

**The Power**



**of Passion & Persistence**

**3 Steps to  
Claiming Your  
Position of  
Entrepreneur**

**Michele Lee Evans**

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The Power of Passion & Persistence:

3 Steps to Claiming Your Position of Entrepreneur

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The Power of Passion and Persistence

*3 Steps to Claiming Your*

*Position of Entrepreneur*

## ~Introduction~

Good morning, afternoon or evening depending on where you are in the world and what time you may be reading this book. I am Michele Lee Evans, author, speaker, entrepreneur, creative consultant, accessories designer, and radio host. This book is going to speak about the power of passion and persistence, two very important qualities needed in order to become a successful entrepreneur.

Becoming an Entrepreneur is not as simple as having a “product” or a “service” to offer. There is no shortage of people with great ideas and products who have yet to find financial success or sustainability within their industry. What is the magic key? Where is it? How do you make yourself, your products or services and your business stand out from the others? As with anything in life, there must be a passion for what you are providing. There also must be continuous persistence to make your business a success. If anyone knows about passion and persistence, it’s ME, so let me start by sharing how my journey began.

I started my gift basket business in 1998 with my then-boyfriend as a means to make some extra money. I never thought of myself as an “entrepreneur”, more than a “hustler” trying to pay off some bills. We would

make baskets, fill up the trunk of the car and sell them right on the street. I quickly realized that I had a passion for creating one-of-a-kind products. I started with simple glass jars with chocolates and teddy bears for Valentines Day. Then I started making “Mother’s Day” baskets chock full of bath and body products, candles and other novelty gifts. I slowly added baby baskets, wine and cheese baskets and even men’s tool baskets. I was such an amateur on the “business end” of things, I hadn’t even thought of a business name at the time. People were asking for business cards, the business name, and even the website address. “Web WHO?” None of that existed. I made gifts, I sold them from my car. Catch me when you can! But at last, we finally settled on “J & M Designs”, his and my initials. I eventually build a one-page website just so customers could see samples (gift baskets are too big to keep in stock). I thought, “this is great! We are going to go big with this!” We did great with the gift baskets, particularly on major holidays like Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day and Christmas.

In 2005, I was seeking jewelry to wear for a military ball. I couldn’t find anything that captured my eccentricity so I decided to design my own. I purchased crystals, stringing and wrapping wire and all the supplies I need to design myself a truly one-of-a-kind set. The set including a beautiful choker necklace, bracelet,

chandelier earrings, and a cluster ring. I received rave reviews for my jewelry and started getting custom requests. That is how jewelry became a major part of my



business, so much so, that eventually, I stopped making gift baskets altogether.

I was super excited to dive into the wonderful world of jewelry making

and learn all I could to make it as unique as possible. I had found my true PASSION! But over the years is where the “persistence” would come into play. I hadn’t thought about “who” would purchase my eccentric jewelry, where to market it, how to price it competitively. The business portion of this venture was completely lost on me. For 11 years, I struggled to find the right market and get consistent sales. I even considered giving up a few times out of frustration.

Then, I became serious about learning the business end of this. I went to school and received my Master’s in Business and continued in my persistence in making this business a success. Eventually, I had to “break down” and I hired a business coach, learned exactly who my target market was, and began making changes, including the name of the business. Yes,

sometimes, you have to reconsider the very name you have placed on your business. Is it too confusing? Is it clear on what you offer?

Many times, we believe that we can do this all on our own or we feel that we can't afford to hire a coach or consultant to help us learn all we can. Investing in your business is a MUST! You can not expect to be successful without spending money on the right people to help you get there.

I even had to place more focus on my “photography” skills. Learning angles, and lighting to ensure photos piqued the interest of potential buyers. Shortly after going through business coaching and making the needed changes, I began receiving consistent sales in my online boutique, almost to the point of being overwhelmed! Sales are still consistent and even custom order requests have picked up tremendously.

Now that I have taken my creative talents into the world of book writing, web design and other forms of creative consulting, an entirely new world of business have been opened up to me. I have realized how important writing a book for your business is; so much so that I will be writing a collaboration book very soon specifically for jewelry designers like myself! A book for your business opens up doors for speaking

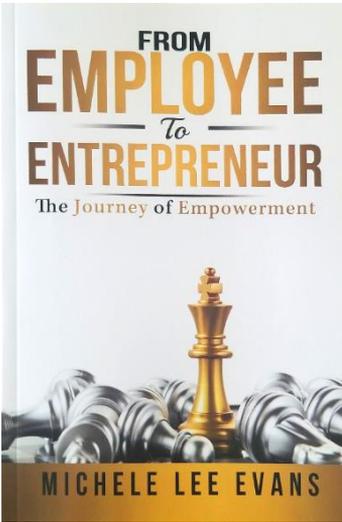
engagements, workshops, and the ability to bring in others in your industry to collaborate on future book projects to double and even triple the marketing power.

Imagine having a book with your business information, website, social links etc being marketed by 10 or even 20 other people? Now THAT is POWER! I have taken my “other” passion of writing and turned it into a money-making tool that markets all of my businesses and services.

So, how can you get started on achieving your power by putting your passion and persistence into play? Do you have a product or service that you are truly passionate about? Are you willing to invest in yourself to become the entrepreneur you always wanted to be? Are you willing to put in the work NOW, so you can enjoy the fruits later? If you answered yes to these questions, let's get started!



## ~ 3 Steps to Begin Claiming Your Title as Entrepreneur ~



Keep in mind that these “three steps” are only the initial steps that you must consider in order to truly begin your journey to empowerment. Consistent learning is also key into having a successful run in your business venture. Even doing as I did and hiring a business coach or having a mentor in your industry will be a necessity.

### **Step One: Finding your Passion**

**Definition:** Webster’s defines passion as: “a strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object, or concept”. If you are currently employed, think of the job you do. Do you enjoy waking up and going to that job every day? Does what you do bring you satisfaction? Do you look forward to serving your clients or customers? Can you honestly say, you enjoy what you do? Or are you the person who dreads when the alarm

goes off and your feet hit the floor? You constantly complain about your co-workers, your boss and the very existence of the company. That is a passionless existence with its only purpose being survival.

**Purpose Fuels Passion:** There is a staunch difference between having a “hobby”, and running a business. As a jewelry designer, my industry is full of fellow designers who are fulfilling a passionate hobby, but not running a profitable business. Your passion as an entrepreneur must also be PROFITABLE. What is the purpose of what you do? Your product or service should either solve a problem, improve on a trend or CREATE a trend. For me, being in an already saturated industry, I knew that my accessories had to stand out and be totally unique from anyone else’s if I was to succeed in this business. My “purpose” is to design pieces that no one else will have and market that very concept. Ask yourself before venturing into the world of entrepreneurship who you seek to serve and what purpose does my product or service provide to my future clients or customers. You must figure out if your purpose is to create wealth if you are non-profit driven with a heart to help humanity or both. Whatever your purpose, it will fuel your passion!

## Passion Requires Perspicacity:



Now that your purpose has fueled your passion to begin your journey of empowerment, what's next? Learning! Perspicacity is the

keenness of mental perception or grasp and embodying astuteness. In other words, the ability and willingness to LEARN. Just because you have a strong desire to become an entrepreneur, and even have a product or service that you are well versed in, does not mean that you know it all. Let's be clear, anyone that has never made a piece of jewelry, can not tell me how to bend and hammer wire, bead a string of pearls or engrave a bracelet. However, there are other designers who have been perfecting their craft longer than I have, who can help me learn a new skill that I can add to my business or teach me a more efficient way of designing accessories. I am not the "guru of jewelry". Art is subjective and thus, always requires learning something new.

Even with the knowledge I have on what I do, I still needed to learn about the business side. You see, my "passion" was blind. I knew I had a product,

handmade with love, that everyone would rush to buy! I build a website, started social media accounts, posted some stuff and waited for the sales to come pouring in. I didn't want to accept any help from anyone else. There were professional web designers who wanted to assist me with simplifying my clutter-bomb website (the less is more adage) and even those who wanted to help me market more proficiently to increase visibility and sales. First of all, those people charge money. A LOT of money. My mindset was not that of an "entrepreneur". See, I was still in the mindset of a "hustler", not a business owner. I thought, "I can do this myself" because I thought I knew it ALL. WRONG!

"The Man that knows something knows that he knows nothing at all." Erykah Badu from the song "*On and On*". That was me. I was that person. I thought I knew it ALL. I knew nothing but how to twist wire and bead strings.

While passion is critical to fueling you to work those long days and weeks, much like in our personal lives, passion can also blind you in your work life. You need business acumen as much as you need passion if you want to succeed as an entrepreneur.

***“ You have to be burning with an idea, or a problem, or a wrong that you want to right. If you’re not passionate enough from the start, you’ll never stick it out.”***

**Steve Jobs**



## **Step Two: Planning**

### **The Stats:**

According to research done by Bradley University, 70 to 80% of new businesses fail within the first year. Bradley also found that amongst the businesses that survived the first year, about half of those will fail within the next four. And what is the number one cause of this failure? It isn't a lack of passion, or a super product or service. According to Dun and Bradstreet, it is due to a lack of business planning.

For the ladies, since this is so important to many of us, think about a wedding. The man has proposed on one knee and asked you to spend the rest of your life

with him. From that very DAY, you begin planning that wedding. You have to figure out who will be your maid-of-honor, the bridesmaids, what will be the color scheme, how many guests, the location, the decorations, the officiate, the music, the photographer, the menu, the cake, and even what family members WON'T be invited. And most people do what? HIRE a WEDDING PLANNER to ensure that their vision goes off without a hitch. So why would we not apply that same energy to something as important as our business?

This goes back to the “invest in your business” point made earlier. A part of your planning should include what and “who” you will need to get your business started. This also includes industry-specific state laws that you should be aware of. Do you need a lawyer for licensing? Can you design a simple website yourself or will you need to hire a web designer? All of these questions should be answered in the planning process. Let's get into the keynotes for planning for success!

### **Goal-Setting:**

Many of us often set goals at the end of the year and call them our “New Year's Resolutions”. Raise your hand while reading this if you are guilty of not sticking to most of them! We set goals to lose weight, stop smoking

or drinking, eat healthier, spend more time with the family or get started on that hobby you love. Planning begins with setting goals. It is almost impossible to begin planning for anything until you have set an end goal or a series of end goals, and this is particularly true in business.

Whatever goals you set for your business, they should be clear, concise, definitive and most importantly, REALISTIC. If I were to set a goal of making one million dollars in the next six months selling my jewelry, unless someone very wealthy and very in love with my jewelry purchased 10 pieces at \$100,000 each, this is simply an unrealistic goal for my business. Write down what you would like to achieve in your first year, particularly since this is one of the most crucial years for any business. A five and ten-year goal should follow. Understand that your overall goals may change as your learning increases and the market in your industry changes and that's ok!

### **Research:**

Now that your goals have been set, it is time to do some research! Yes. You have to do research as if you are back in school. Using my business as an example again, I had to eventually narrow my target market. As I

mentioned in my foreword, I figured if I made some super eccentric and unique jewelry, every woman on the planet would run to buy what I had to offer. But what about the blue-collar woman who never wears jewelry? What about the older woman who has no use for such bold jewelry and just wants a small rosary? What about the younger women who prefer simplistic office friendly jewelry?

It was crucial for me to create my “avatar” to determine exactly who I needed to market my designs to. An avatar is basically a profile of your ideal customer that details the race or ethnicity, the age group, the education level, professional occupation and yearly salary of your target market. In doing this, you are able to make your marketing efforts less broad to attract the customers or clients most interested in your services or products. This is especially important when advertising on social media sites such as Facebook or Instagram where the market is extremely vast and you may end up wasting money with little to no results.

Another important part of research is PRICING. There are usually two extremes that plague entrepreneurs in this area:

1. You are well over-priced as compared to your competitors and perhaps under-qualified.

2. You are extremely under-priced, cheapening your work or skills and possibly under-cutting your potential profits.

I am always telling those starting a business, particularly, those in an industry such as mine or service based industry, to KNOW YOUR WORTH. Your time, efforts and skills are worth more than any product. However, it is still essential to know what your competitors believe they are worth as well. Be competitive, but be reasonable and fair not only to yourself but to your clients. The fastest way to lose business is to overvalue what you bring to the table when there are so many others offering the same product or service at a lower price.

Case in point, I am a speaker. I have had speaking engagements by which I speak on my abuse survival and anti-bullying. My stories are both true and compelling, however, I am not on the level of say “Les Brown” who may charge \$30,000 to speak for an hour. I have to build up to that level and one day, I WILL! If someone asks me to speak, I have to set my speaking fee to a reasonable amount based on my experience and worth of the content I am providing.

But on the flip side of things, the adage “you get what you pay for” can sometimes apply, so don’t

cheapen yourself either, less future clients think you aren't worth a second look. I remember setting up my jewelry for an event. A woman walked up to my table and was stunned at my creations. Every single piece, she was captivated with. She told me, "You have an amazing gift"! I was totally humbled but completely embarrassed when she picked up a piece, looked at the price tag and said, "Why are you cheapening your work? You are charging \$10 for these earrings when you should be charging \$30 easily!" From that point on, I began to really focus on my pricing and making sure that it was fair, taking into account the amount I spent on supplies and the time it took to design the piece, but also adding in the sheer uniqueness of my creations. Do not "over-price". Do not "under-price". Do your research!

### **Financing:**

We have all heard the saying "it takes money to make money" or "broke money don't make money". There is no way that you can secure supplies, materials, websites, an office space if it applies or even start a marketing campaign without funding. How you achieve your financial needs will really be determined by your industry, product, service and the scope of your goals. If you are looking to hire staff and lease office space, you

may need to take out a business loan. Depending on your concept or industry, grants may be available.

Crowdfunding, especially on tech businesses is also a common practice. Smaller ventures such as mine can be achieved by continuing your employment and saving up money to get you started.

But wait, Michele, isn't the goal to go FROM employee to entrepreneur? Absolutely! But unless you take out a loan or already have savings dedicated to your new venture, exactly how will it be funded? Please understand that the point of this book is not to tell people to "quit their jobs" and throw caution out the window. In this day and age, if you have employment and you are able to maintain, you are blessed! As Taurea Avant says, "Don't think of your employment as a JOB. Think of it as your investment firm". Don't say "I have to go to WORK". Say, "I have to go to my investment firm" because truly, that is what your job will now become. Your current employment will become the financial vehicle to drive you into your self-employment.

Ensure that you start a separate business bank account and keep good records (hire an accountant if necessary). For those of you who may work out of your homes as I do, it is essential that you keep your housing finances separated from business finances. At the end of

the year when it is time to start gathering tax info, you should be able to say, “I HAVE RECEIPTS!” For me, I have a dedicated room in my home for my jewelry making and radio show broadcasting. It is a “dual-studio”. I also have a dedicated office, all of which I claim a percentage of at the end of the year. Find a trusted tax professional that can help you with all of these important details.

There will be sacrifices you will have to make financially when you step into the world of entrepreneurship. You can’t “ball on a budget”. And you WILL have to be on a strict budget if your dream of entrepreneurship is to become a reality.



### **Step Three: Persistence**



Discouragement during this journey can come in many forms from not having enough support from the people you feel you should, to not achieving a healthy following and definitely

not hitting your sales target. It can be debilitating and

cause you to want to give up. You may feel like a failure at times. I speak from experience people. Your mindset has to stay in positive mode and your will to prosper, iron-clad. This is a venture by which, truly only the strong will survive! Let's hit our final four keynotes and then I will bring it home!

### **Definition:**

Webster's defines persistence as "firm or obstinate continuance in a course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition". Now I'm going to speak to the men on this one because generally, men are the hunters and the chasers. So when you saw that "fine" woman walking down the street or at the bar and she flashed that smile at you that made your knees weak, you were not about to let her get away! You were persistent (not creepy), in letting her know that you were interested in getting to know her better.

When and IF she gave you her number, you were persistent in calling her to schedule that first date. She denied your requests but you continued to call and she finally says yes! And after that day, you were persistent in showing her that you wanted her in your life. You put your time, effort and energy into someone that you desired, to achieve the outcome you wanted. This

concept is equally important in business. You have to pour your time, effort and energy 100% into this.

### **Drop the F-Bombs:**

No, I am not about to become vulgar! The f-bombs I am referring to is “friends and family”. I want to believe that every person who starts a business, thinks that their friends and family are going to come crawling out of the woodworks to support their business. And initially, they may purchase a book, or a piece of jewelry or use your service once or twice. But do not mistake friends and family for your CLIENTS or CUSTOMERS. They are not and your income can never be sustained on them.

What I have learned to do is to urge my friends and family to offer more “moral” support, particularly on social media. As I always say, “sharing is caring”. It only takes a few seconds to forward an email, repost a link or give a business card to someone who may need my products or services. I had to learn not to be disappointed when friends and family aren’t included in my sales sheet. Instead, encourage them to take part in your growth in other ways other than increasing your profits.

Understand that some friends and family may also simply do not want you to succeed. It is a hard pill to swallow, but the truth. Some people do not have goals or vision for anything else other than to maintain and “live”. They can not share in your vision because they don’t understand it. Do not waste your time attempting to explain it to them. Find your target market and grow your business. Utilize the support of those friends and family who want to see you succeed, but do not “depend” on them.

### **Social Media:**

Speaking of social media, in this day and age of super fast information and online shopping, it is imperative that your business has a profile on all major social media sites. A website goes without saying. Even if you have a brick and mortar store, people that don’t reside in your local area will have a hard time finding you if you don’t have a website and a place where they can connect with you.

A major challenge with social media is growing your followers and even how to manage them in the midst of so many other challenges that come with starting a business. There are several tools that help you manage and merge your social media account to lessen

the headache. If you are hiring a staff, a Social Media Manager is a must! Ensure that you are posting often and relevant information to your business products and services. Platforms such as Facebook pages makes the process easy because posts can be pre-scheduled with is super convenient!

Marketing on social media is made relatively simple with built-in ad assistance on all major social media platforms. Just ensure that you plan your advertising budget, select the correct target audience and stick to that budget! If what you are doing isn't working, stop throwing good money after bad and change your strategy.

***"Nothing in the world can take the place of***

***PERSISTENCE and DETERMINATION:***

***Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent.***

***Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.***

***Education will not; the world is full of educated***

***derelicts. PERSISTENCE and DETERMINATION alone, are***

***almost omnipotent. Now I'm not saying you should not***

***get an education, but you can have an education, and***

***be weak inside, and never experience the opportunity***

***that education could have provided for you because***

***you just didn't have the persistence and determination to make it happen."***

***Calvin Coolidge 30th President of the USA.***



## **Conclusion**

The journey from employee to entrepreneur will be full of challenges, long sleepless nights, months when money is funny, feelings of doubt and fear. But if your purpose is known, that purpose is fueling your passion, you turn that passion into a plan, and stay persistent in turning that plan into a real sustainable profit, your dream will become a reality.

Be realistic in setting your goals and do NOT let your goal be money. Of course, we all set out in business to be profitable and make lots of money right? However, if that is your ONLY or even your MAJOR focal point, you will soon realize that you are right back into a “job” that you are miserable in.

Understand that the moment you say to yourself, “I am going to be wealthy in a year,” is the very moment

you may have just hammered the nail in your entrepreneurship coffin. This is a marathon, not a sprint. Think of yourself as the turtle, slow yet consistent, aware of the dangers ahead. Not the rabbit who haphazardly sprints into unknown forests.

I thank you for getting your copy of this e-book and I hope the information I have provided will get you started on your own exciting journey of empowerment! If you feel you need even more direction, I encourage you to visit [strategy.mle-enterprises.com](http://strategy.mle-enterprises.com) to reserve a spot for your FREE 15-minute strategy session with me.

We will discuss your main goals for your new or current business and what your next steps should be. I can even help you with web design, logo design, marketing materials and even getting you started on writing that book for your business. Visit [www.mle-enterprises.com](http://www.mle-enterprises.com) for a complete list of my services.

## From Employee to Entrepreneur

The Journey of Empowerment



Remember, the success of your business depends on the passion you possess for what you provide, and the persistence you put into being successful! Frustration and discouragement will come. Fight through, seek the help that you need, refocus and regroup if you must, but never give up on your dreams, your goals, and your passion. Keep pushing through!

Michele Lee Evans is a native of Washington, DC, currently residing in Houston, TX. Michele holds her Master's in Business Administration with a double minor in Computer Information Systems and Human Resource Management from Strayer University. Michele is the CEO of M.L.E Enterprises, Mileeva Designs, her handcrafted jewelry company, and The F.A.A.B Foundation, her anti-abuse, anti-bullying non-profit. Michele is a published author, speaker, entrepreneur, creative consultant, accessories designer, youth advocate, and radio personality.

She has written the book, R.O.A.R (Rude Opinions Aren't Reality), which is a guideline for parents, teachers, and youth on how to identify and address cases of bullying. She is also the author of two additional books, "From Employee to Entrepreneur: The Journey of Empowerment" with renown author, speaker and coach, Taurea (Tor-Ree-Ahh) Avant, as well as "I Am A Survivor: Stories of Tragedy & Triumph", a collaboration book lead by her, highlighting her own personal testimony of abuse survival along with six other phenomenal women.

Michele is a motivational speaker who focuses on spiritual and emotional healing, as well as instilling a strong sense of self-worth. She speaks at women and youth conferences, churches and anywhere else her story needs to be heard. As a creative consultant,

Michele helps future authors and entrepreneurs with book publishing, logo and book designs, website design and promotional materials. Michele is also the host of the podcast Mileeva Speaks, where her mantra is simply, “Music, Networking and TALK”. She provides a platform for artists and entrepreneurs and discusses important issues affecting society today.

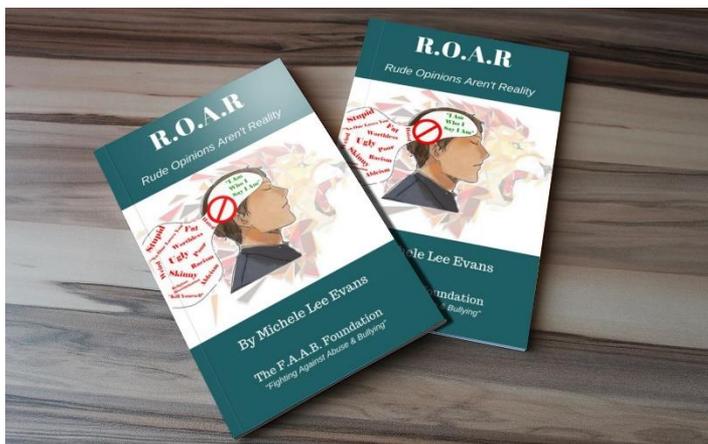
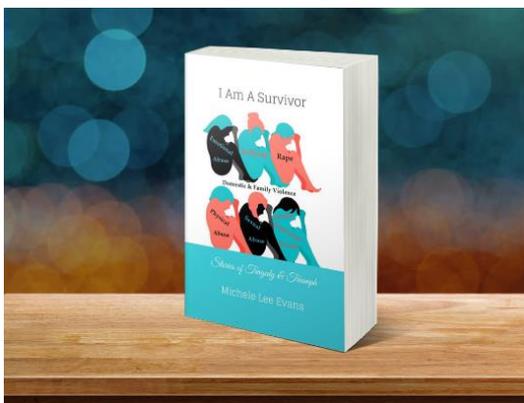
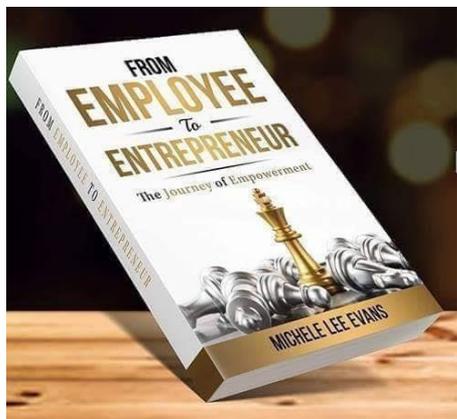
One of Michele’s favorite quotes is by Les Brown and is the inspiration behind her book R.O.A.R, *“Never let someone’s opinion of you, become your reality”*.

Connect with Michele on social media:



Order more books by Michele Lee Evans at

[www.mle-enterprises.com](http://www.mle-enterprises.com)



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A portrait of Michele Lee Evans, a woman with long, dark, curly hair, wearing a black top with a gold necklace. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right.

## About the Author

Michele Lee Evans is an author, speaker, CEO of M.L.E Enterprises, Founder of The F.A.A.B Foundation (Fighting Against Abuse & Bullying, Owner of Mileeva Designs handcrafted, statement accessories, women and youth advocate, creative consultant and radio host of Mileeva Speaks. She uses her skills and passion to help others tell their stories by writing their own books, speak on her own survival from abuse and suicide, and helps other entrepreneurs to develop and grow their business.

The logo for MLE Enterprises features the letters 'M', 'L', and 'E' in a stylized font. The 'M' is black, the 'L' is black, and the 'E' is split into yellow and blue sections.

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