

Amanda Quinn:

This is Amanda here and I am here with Michelle Thomas. Hi Michelle.

Michelle Thomas:

Hi Amanda.

Amanda Quinn:

How are you today?

Michelle Thomas:

I am awesome.

Amanda Quinn:

Good. That's amazing.

Michelle Thomas:

In this crazy world, someones got to be awesome.

Amanda Quinn:

Yeah, there is a little bit of crazy going on for sure. Now everyone, I wanted to jump in today and I want to chat with Michelle live because Michelle and I, we've known each other for a few years now as you joined our fitness and nutrition expert certification program two and a half years ago, two years ago?

Michelle Thomas:

Two years ago.

Amanda Quinn:

Two years ago.

Michelle Thomas:

Just coming up on my two year-

Amanda Quinn:

Anniversary.

Michelle Thomas:

Certification.

Amanda Quinn:

That's awesome. Yeah, and we met and we were talking a lot about sort of your past, your journey through your own health and everything else and why becoming a certified fitness nutrition expert was so important. I remember these conversations over two years ago, when we talked on the phone and we had lots of conversations about your why and what was driving you.

Amanda Quinn:

Would you mind sharing with everyone today just your story about your own personal journey and why this was such an important step for you?

Michelle Thomas:

Sure. Okay. So at 42 years old, I weighed 286 pounds and I could not walk up the stairs to tuck in my children at night. And I was an older mom, so I had very young children and then I had teenagers. And at that point I realized that my quality of life basically sucked and I had to do something to lose the weight. But I had lost it twice before. I lost a hundred pounds at 21 and then I lost it again at 31 so I had to wait 11 years instead of 10 this time and wait until 42. But I had struggled, I was the big kid from kindergarten on. I had always been overweight, could never lose the weight and keep it off. When you and I met, I had managed to keep it off for three years and now working on five kind of close to six.

Amanda Quinn:

Congratulations.

Michelle Thomas:

I actually implemented my psych degree from undergrad and just completely revamped and did not listen to anybody in health and fitness industry because they're all about the, "You have to eat nothing and work out really hard. Then you have to continue that to keep it off." And that doesn't work. I like sweets and Mexican food.

Amanda Quinn:

Shout out to Mexican food. I love Mexican.

Michelle Thomas:

Not so much into the alcohol, but sweets and Mexican food. I love those two things. Once I figured out how to get it off and keep it off, I was helping people, but in my day job, I was actually a software architect and when you and I first started talking, I was going to take Fit Chicks to write software. But then through the Fit Chicks program, that kind of all changed so we can go down that road later if you want.

Michelle Thomas:

But it was important to me, because helping these women that I had been helping just as somebody who had succeeded lit my fire. I was helping them be able to get on the floor and play with their kids. I was helping them be able to go to the grocery store without hurting. Just doing the chores around their house, because most of these women just like I, they were busy observing life and they couldn't live it. Because they hurt both emotionally and physically so bad that they couldn't get past that to lose the weight. So through Fit Chicks I learned how important that aspect of it was to me and just that's how I kind of switched my purpose while I was in fit Chicks.

Amanda Quinn:

The word Onederland, because I know you explained it to me, but can you explain what that means exactly? Because I know that there's some people will totally know but other people will not. And so

would you mind explaining why, because that's the name of your business is Onederland Wellness. And what is the reason behind that and what is the reason for that word?

Michelle Thomas:

Okay. There is a whole entire population out there who want nothing more than to get below 199.9. That 200 mark, to be able to say that they are a, "Normal weight." And that whole concept of I've reached Onederland, permeates the social world of a major milestone. And it is much more likely that they're going to be closer to healthy at 199, than they are at the larger weights. At 286 pounds, I was in constant pain and agony and wellness was, my husband is a chiropractor and would give me all of this, wellness advice and made me want to slap him. But reaching that goal is just a major mile marker in anybody's weight loss journey if that's where they're coming from.

Amanda Quinn:

And in terms of your business, I mean, you said that you kind of shifted sort of your goal. Because when you first started out you wanted to create, when we first started it was a macro unicorn, I remember. And that was the domain name that you purchased and you were working on this software for that. What made you shift from creating the original idea to what you're doing now? Because there was a big shift from what you originally came to me and we were trying to figure out how to include your software into the programming and education, to what you're actually doing.

Michelle Thomas:

It was multiple calls with you. And then the business section, you have this business segment where we go through and we visualize what we want our life to look like when we reach that point. And I realized that at no point was it sitting behind a computer writing code. It was interacting with people, which I live in the middle of nowhere. So 90% of my interaction anyway has always been through webcams. So I'm a rare person, COVID-19 did not change my life because I'm still living exactly the same life I was before.

Amanda Quinn:

Self isolation is key.

Michelle Thomas:

Yeah. I live 20 miles from town. I work from home and I go to town for groceries. But I love that interaction and I love working with the people. And I realized through that assignment that I really wanted to put in a gym here in my 40 acres somewhere. I already have it picked out.

Michelle Thomas:

Where we're going to put a chiropractic office too. But what I wanted to focus on was more the mindset and helping people use habits and mindset. Because we don't even realize how our habits affect what we're doing. And by flipping just little switches and making little tiny tweaks, I realized that I'm using kind of my coding background and my psych degree, all while getting to interact with some of the most amazing people I think I've ever met in my life, who just don't know. They think they have to starve themselves and work out. And when they can't work out, that's always the excuse to go off the rails. It lights my fire. I get off my calls and I'm just ping-pong off the walls. [crosstalk 00:08:24], because I'm supposed to be in bed by 8:30.

Amanda Quinn:

When you started your business, did you always envision it to be completely online?

Michelle Thomas:

Yes. I have a high degree of anxiety, and although I can come off very social and active and goofy here, I have a very difficult time doing that in large groups. I can do that one-on-one, but large groups, it doesn't work. And I knew in order to replace my income as a software architect that I needed to do group stuff. So you and I had a conversation once and you're like, "Well you need more coaching experience." And I'm like, "No." And then you came back to me later and said, "No, you don't need more coaching experience. You're fine."

Michelle Thomas:

But I had to figure out a way to work with my anxiety and at the same time build something that I was proud of and that I wanted and that I wanted to nurture, and that I wanted to build up over time. So it's kind of like I have a 24 year old and I have a 14 year old and then there's a 15 year old in the middle. I nurture Onederland Wellness just like I did them when they were little until I built them up. And now I've set my 24 year old free to go off and have his own.

Amanda Quinn:

Which congratulations by the way. That's excellent.

Michelle Thomas:

Thank you, I'm very excited to be a grandma.

Amanda Quinn:

Now, what would you say, like for anyone who's listening right now, what would you say is one of the biggest lessons that you learned when it came to your business, from building your business?

Michelle Thomas:

The biggest lesson I've learned is to keep an open mind. Just because you don't see the path, doesn't mean you can't build it by taking pieces of perfection from other people and build what you want. I was told by numerous people that I could not build something online 100% and do it. Not from you, but from other people that I could not do this and that what I was trying to put together probably wouldn't make it.

Michelle Thomas:

And I was like but what I'm building, I know people need and I know that people that need it also don't want to go out in public, because when you're that big it hurts too bad to go. So I said, "My job is to reach them and bring them in." So keeping an open mind and being willing to trust yourself, which it's very hard to do and it terrifies the crap out of you. And if it terrifies you that much, that means keep going. But it's trusting yourself and keeping an open mind and looking for the answers to your questions in unusual places.

Amanda Quinn:

I love that. I really liked that because I do think it is about being open minded and being an entrepreneur. Even if you think there's a path, it's usually never a straight path. It usually does like 100

twists and turns along the way until you get to the end and then when you get to the end and you think that you've figured it out, all of a sudden it's like a bomb drops and you're like, "I've got to figure it out again?" And that's okay.

Michelle Thomas:

The other piece is, find coaches that resonate with you, link arms with them and work together. It's not a competition. So I'm going to let a secret out and I hope this doesn't bother you too much. I vape and I actually was vaping on one of my videos the other night on Facebook and a lady came in and she goes, "You don't still vape, do you?" And I was like, "Yeah, I do."

Michelle Thomas:

It is the one vice I have left. I gave up diet Pepsi, I gave up alcohol 25 years ago, 26 years ago. I don't do overly processed foods, but I'm ADD and if I'm not vaping you aren't going to follow my train of thought. So you don't have to be perfect in order to do this. Because the people that like me may not like you, but people that don't like me may love you to death. And I have seen more growth in the last six months by linking arms with other coaches who have similar niches, not the same but similar. And bouncing ideas off of them and coming up with new ideas and new roadmaps and new plans and doing Facebook Lives together and just growing together as a group.

Amanda Quinn:

No, and I absolutely agree with you and I think too just I love that you shared that because I think so many people are afraid to be their authentic self. They're afraid that if they don't follow the path or they don't look the part or act the way or try to fit into a certain mold, that people are not going to take them seriously or people aren't going to trust their word. But it's like people will trust you when you show them who you are because they want to know you. And if you are trying to hide pieces of you, that'll show because you'll never be 100% authentic. So it's like you have to be open enough to just be honest.

Michelle Thomas:

Huge. Because as soon as I gave up the whole concept that I had to hide this, I became me on camera. I became the Michelle that you know when we talk. And the people are reaching out more, videos are getting like 12 000 views before I even put an ad to them.

Amanda Quinn:

That's amazing.

Michelle Thomas:

And so it's really about being who you are. And I say this now sitting here, but I want you to know, I literally broke down in tears before I did my first Facebook Live. My anxiety was so high and one of my coping mechanisms when I get anxious is to eat. So I had to go very slow and build up my ability to the Facebook Lives. And then I literally did 30 Facebook Lives in 30 days. I thought I was going to die.

Amanda Quinn:

I remember that. You did the challenge to yourself.

Michelle Thomas:

Yes. And I did it 6:00 in the morning, my time because I get up at 4:30 and work out. So I would come up from my workout all pumped up from my workout and then I would do my 10, 15 minute Live. But that was the only way to get over it was to, I did like a few here and there and a few here and a few there. And the only way to get over it was right before Thanksgiving, I did 30 days of Live and it went all the way through right up until Christmas. And then shortly thereafter I just decided that, you know what, these people want to know me and part of me is the vaping, because I used to smoke four packs a day.

Amanda Quinn:

That's crazy. Oh my gosh, how did you even have time to do anything else?

Michelle Thomas:

I weighed 286 pounds, lived on frozen hamburgers, Jimmy D's and sausage egg and cheese biscuits, smoked four packs a day and lived on diet Pepsi, never drank water. So the spokesperson for it is totally possible people to go from that to being healthy no matter how you define healthy, anything is better than what I was doing to myself for 42 years. So if this is the only thing I have left and it makes it so people can actually understand me. And my husband doesn't beg me to go find some kind of a stimulant, whether it be caffeine or nicotine, then that's just the way I roll.

Amanda Quinn:

That's how I feel about pizza. I'm never giving up pizza.

Michelle Thomas:

We get Papa Murphy's and bake it in the oven. So there's just some things in life. I can't give up smothered burritos, I can't give up pizza, but you can still have those things and be healthy. You just have to figure out how to make them work in your life.

Amanda Quinn:

Exactly. It's so funny, I was literally just going to ask you if there was something when you were starting your business that you were like so scared to do that you did. And you just told me, you told me you stopped a minute and you're like, "And Facebook Lives made me cry."

Michelle Thomas:

Yes.

Amanda Quinn:

Is there anything-

Michelle Thomas:

I threw up. I think I threw up twice.

Amanda Quinn:

Is there anything in your business right now that you just love doing? It's like the thing that like when you get to do it you're just like, "I want more of that." And do you plan on growing in that area?

Michelle Thomas:

Ironically it is the Zoom coaching calls that I do with my membership twice a month or with my one-on-one clients. I absolutely love the members in my membership program. They are phenomenal women who are working hard to make changes that will fit in their lifestyle rather than trying to change their lifestyle to fit how they... It's this whole concept of can I do this for a hundred years?

Michelle Thomas:

We can't give up pizza. So how can you still have pizza and lose weight, maintain weight, whatever. And they are working so hard at understanding how they can do this and make a balance. And when I walk out of those coaching calls, my husband will be like, "I take it was a good one?" Because the grin is from ear to ear and I'm like bouncing no matter how tired I was when I went into it, I'm bouncing. And it's just like we're sitting here having this conversation because it's all on Zoom.

Michelle Thomas:

I do all of my group coaching calls on Zoom they get to unmute themselves. We have two way conversations and sometimes I will split them up in different rooms and you know, these people go work on this and these people go work on this and I'll bounce between the rooms. But that is what I walk away from that just fired up, because these women all have teenagers and they like I, have sat and watched them and they want to go do the obstacle course races. We do the inflatable race each year and I'm so sad.

Amanda Quinn:

It's so fun. I know, I love that too.

Michelle Thomas:

We have two races that we do every summer to celebrate my weight loss. One is the big dog brag, it's a mud run. I'm, I'm terrified of water, so I skip some of the water things. And I take pictures and I'm like, I don't run. We do this as a family and we walk. We come out, we're all covered in mud, but there's some things I skip because I can't do water by my face. It just makes me hyperventilate. And so I'm like, just because you don't like this piece doesn't mean you won't like this piece.

Michelle Thomas:

Because my husband will take pictures of me climbing up ropes, dragging kids. There was at one point where I couldn't carry my children up to put them in bed and now I can pull them up a rope ladder to the top of a hill.

Michelle Thomas:

So it's all about balance and converting things and realizing that in none of this do you have to be perfect. I don't have to be a runner to do mud runs and inflatable races.

Amanda Quinn:

Agreed. I love the inflatable races too. I've done that before.

Michelle Thomas:

So fun.

Amanda Quinn:

So fun.

Michelle Thomas:

I'm so sad that there'll be no bounce house races the summer.

Amanda Quinn:

I know. I know. Such a weird life right now. What would you say to anyone who is watching this right now who is feeling inspired, feeling excited, wanting to start their own business or wanting to get certified as a fitness and nutrition expert?

Michelle Thomas:

I would say go for it, because you can never go wrong with Laura and Amanda because, [crosstalk 00:20:32].

Amanda Quinn:

Oh. This was not planned guys.

Michelle Thomas:

No, this is not planned. But they truly honestly care and give love. And I've taken multiple certifications since Fit Chicks because there were areas I wanted more of. And I can tell you that I don't still have conversations with ACE. I'm an ACE health coach. I don't have conversations with these other places I'm certified through because I'm a number. And so Fit Chicks, not only do you have you guys, but the whole community where I still talk to several people in the community and it's been two years. I've done Facebook Lives for them and they've come in my group. Some of them have given me bonuses for my programs and I've given them bonuses for their programs.

Michelle Thomas:

So it's an ongoing relationship that you nurture and some of us barter, because I'm really good with the mindset and basic nutrition. But there are other people that are way better at building HIT style workouts than I am because I'm a weightlifter. I don't like HIT. Sorry it's not for me.

Michelle Thomas:

But I do love lifting heavy and the mindset and the basic nutrition and stuff. So sometimes I will have somebody come in that is really good with HIT, they can come up with a low impact HIT program for my people and then I will provide them with habit trackers or mindset things or whatever. So when you join Fit Chicks you get this whole community that is totally there to support you. And yes, I still hang out in the group.

Amanda Quinn:

I love it. I know, you still chat and you help people in our community. I see you answering questions and things like that, it's amazing.

Michelle Thomas:

Any time I see a psych question, because that's like my day time job guys.

Amanda Quinn:

[inaudible 00:22:39] Send it Michelle's way. Not me.

Amanda Quinn:

No, thank you so much Michelle. I really appreciate that. And I mean obviously it's been an honor to know you and to be able to see your progress throughout the years and just to get to know you better and to be able to work with you. It's been a pleasure and you know that, you know that I really enjoy our conversations. How can anyone who is intrigued, interested, wanting to learn more about Onederland Wellness, maybe they have their own goals to reach. How can they get in touch with you?

Michelle Thomas:

The best way is probably through Facebook. And it's just if you search Onederland Wellness and it's O-N-E-D-E-R-L-A-N-D and then wellness, and then also Onderlandwellness.net is my website and you can actually chat with me through messenger on either platform.

Amanda Quinn:

Perfect.

Michelle Thomas:

But I'm everywhere. Instagram, it's Onederland Wellness, Pinterest, it's Onederland Wellness. So if you're interested in searching, basically just go to any of those and put in Onederland Wellness and you'll find me.

Amanda Quinn:

Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Michelle, and thank you so much just for sharing your journey and then also sharing just sort of your business savviness and what you were kind of working on creating. And as always, I just wish you much success and continued success with the people and the impact that you're making in this world.

Michelle Thomas:

Well, thank you. And you know how much I love you and how much I appreciate you and thank you for letting me spread the Amanda Love.

Amanda Quinn:

Thank you.