



Lessons from a Thriving Power Couple, With Kate and Shawn Boyer of Anatomie



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As a part of our series about lessons from Thriving Power Couples, I had the pleasure of interviewing Kate and Shawn Boyer, co-founders of Anatomie.

Kate and Shawn Boyer are the dynamic husband and wife duo behind Anatomie. Born in Budapest, Kate got a MBA in International Trade in France, while working as a girls' gymnastics coach and dressing the team in outfits she designed herself. From there, as a self-taught designer, Kate developed private label collections for many exclusive resorts in St. Barth and held private shopping events throughout the upscale Caribbean. She later met her husband Shawn in Miami, where he was designing customized clothing for hard-to-fit athletic men. The two joined forces to design sportswear for brands such as Elite Models, Cigarette Boats, and Lamborghini.

With Kate as CEO and Shawn as Creative Director, they launched Anatomie in 2006, a name that speaks to the impeccable fit and sleek tailoring of the brand's designs. After four years and over 600 private events, their omni-channel presence is strong on their dot.com, wholesale and VIP direct sales platforms. Kate, Shawn and their 6 year-old daughter Charlee maintain a base in Miami with their bulldog Luna. They regularly travel the world together, with Kate having been to over 35 countries and Charlee having already been to 7 countries by the age of 5.

Thank you so much for doing this with us! Can you tell us a story about what brought you two to your respective career paths?

Kate: Survival needs! I started selling fitness clothes to pay for my MBA in France. While coaching a young girls' team for competitions, I started making clothes for them to travel, train and compete in. Very early, I fell in love with stretch fabrics and sporty but elegant-looking styles that could be worn day in and out, season over season. The business grew in France, and then in the Caribbean. I met Shawn in Miami and we instantly combined forces. We always had a common love for this business, and for each other in the mix of it!

S hawn: Kate and I were both involved in fashion before we met each other. I was doing athletic-fit menswear and she was doing activewear. My friends are sports and fitness models and were in St Barth's on vacation. One day, they put their photos on the wall of fame at Form Fitness. Kate was coming to the USA for a trade show and used my roommate and his wife as Models. My roommate said, "I am modeling for this lady, she has very cool Italian textiles. You should meet her." I said, "I am Busy," to which he said, "Make some time."

When Kate and I first interacted, it was all business. I was designing for her and she was manufacturing for me. However, then business turned to monkey business, and now we have a six-year-old daughter.

Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you two got married?

Kate: An incredible whirlwind of customers took our relationship and business to the next level. We've had amazing adventures all around the world, including making a baby in Maui while we did our pop-up with the Four Seasons. Those ladies watched us hustle as a couple, and then as a family with our baby girl hanging in the barn all day while I was out selling! We've also met customers who initially came to redeem gift cards we gave out to NetJets and Inspirato that turned into investors.

Shawn: I am from Ohio. I thought I was well traveled, yet Kate is from Budapest and went to school in France.

As soon as we married, the world was a much bigger place with cities like St. Tropez, Nice, Milano, and Lake Como. As a menswear designer, all of my heroes were Italian. Standing in front of Giorgio Armani's headquarters in Milano was fantastic. We love everything Italy, and cannot wait to get back. The most interesting story is that travel changes your life.

Can you share a story about the funniest mistake you made when you were first starting? Can you tell us what lesson you learned from that?

Kate: Oh, those burn out tees that were bleeding! They were made in India and stained our customers' nails, leather car seats and even our washing machine! We still laugh about that so we remember to stick to our core competency. The other one happened two decades ago when we accepted an order for 50,000 units of polos from Bacardi without knowing where or how to make them. We shipped them on time, but they all looked differently as we hustled with over ten factories to complete the order! Don't bite off more than what you can chew! Shawn and I tend to do that.

Shawn: We were doing private labels in the beginning before establishing Anatomie. We designed a collection for Cigarette Offshore Racing, and it was a big order at that time. We did not have a business account, so when they asked us what the name of the company was for the deposit, I said Jet Set Style. There was no such thing. Now we had a big check and nowhere to deposit it. I called my mother, had her set up a corporation, and opened a bank account under Jet Set Style Inc.

What did we learn from that? Always be prepared to take the deposit, and always make sure you get the deposit.

What do you think makes your company stand out? Can you share a story?

Kate: What makes us stand out is our personal connection to the end users, our value beyond expectation of a nearly indestructible pant we perfected for over a decade, and our unique partnerships with world class companies. Also, a total focus on this “Anatomie” look and feel for an elevated casual wardrobe like no other. The most lightweight pants on the market are made by Anatomie. They were a huge success the first time they shipped to Equinox clubs nationwide back in 2010 and sold out in four hours. We already knew we were onto something back then!

Something that also sets us apart are our marketing partnerships. Whether it’s the *Forbes* Travel Guide, Signature Travel Network through our Escape Artist program, or Micato Safaris and their charity “America shares,” we always have creative and kind collaborations that elevate and differentiate the brand.

Shawn: We started Anatomie from scratch in a one-bedroom apartment. We had to sell to survive. We did hundreds of trunk shows. We were always on the road with a few racks and suitcases full of clothing. The good news was we would set retail records wherever we went, but the bad news was that the accounts would not buy — they just wanted us to do events because they were so effective.

You are talking about a decade of face-to-face interactions with the most dynamic ladies on planet earth.

Our company stands out because of our personal connection with our customer base. It is one thing. Our ladies are diehard fans. It is a whole other story when we were growing too fast, and they loaned us money to keep up with the growth, buy more fabric and pay the factories.

They set us up in their homes while we were traveling and brought us into the best private communities in the country. They have pushed our brand and personal lives beyond expectations. Since the beginning, they’ve endorsed us from the heart. The story is simple — we had no advertising budget, no PR budget, and no production budget. Do not be afraid to build your company one customer at a time.

Are you working on any exciting new projects now? How do you think that will help people?

Kate: We exist to empower and inspire. Our Palm Beach pop-up location, and soon to be opening location in Westport, CT, function as fit studios that allow ladies to try items on and get to know not only their fit, but also their local VIP stylist. We view this service the same way Uber provides a driver to everyone!

When you do not have to iron, dry clean and can travel with simply your carry-on, you save yourself time, money, and energy. These are precious elements now more than ever!

Shawn: We have some exciting new products coming out this year that have been a long time coming. We've created new styles that follow the same DNA of our brand with a modern, clean and put-together look.

What advice would you give to other CEOs or founders to help their employees to thrive?

Kate: Similarly to how we empower and inspire our customers, we have to do that to each other as well. You have to give them opportunities to rise up, solve problems, and celebrate them when they do. I think they want to make me a t-shirt that says "Figure it out," because that's what I always say. Our team has stock options so the sense of ownership is real.

Shawn: As startup entrepreneurs, we are wearing all hats. We couldn't afford to hire people in the beginning. We are constantly teaching ourselves how to do everything. We manage chaos because our lives depend on it.

As we change gears and start to depend on others, we must trust that we have the right people in the right positions and let them do their jobs. In the beginning, we had bad habits. Its fine for a small business but it's not sustainable. To help employee thrive, you must set them up for success by hiring the right person for the right position. We have been using the predictive index to assess potential new employees and it 100% helps. I highly recommend this for new hires.

How do you define “Leadership”?

Kate: Influencing and driving decisions and impact is how I define leadership. It has to happen over 1,000 times a day in every facet of the organization!

Shawn: Clear direction. If everyone understands the direction and how we get to our goals, you have more buy in. Listening more and talking less. Hire the right people and let them do their Job — don't hire an expert and then tell them how to do their job.

None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?

Kate: First of all, I wouldn't be in this country in the first place if it weren't for Shawn. We also have our initial seed investor, Scott Rhodenizer, who believed in the two of us and is still a shareholder in the company. Next comes those incredible customers, Sarah Walsh and Arlyn Miller, and their husbands, who not only bought our product but also shares in the company. Lastly, our board of directors, Joe Abrams, Lisa Peddy, David J. Scheiner, Andy Sturner and Larry O'Brien, are always there to advise us during the toughest moments.

Shawn: We have been truly fortunate. There have been so many amazing people that helped us along the way. I could not pick one — it was the synergy of all them.

One group that has been phenomenal for our development is the South Florida Strategic Forum. This amazing group of people has impacted our brand and personal lives in so many ways. You can ask them about any subject or discuss a problem and they will give direction from the heart. Our guest speakers are titans of industry. The education and things we learn from these incredible people is a true game changer.

How have you used your success to bring goodness to the world?

Kate: Yes! We were able to donate pants to nurses and doctors on the front line, and are actively participating in charity work every month with various organizations we believe in. This includes the Equal Justice Initiative, Feeding America, No Kid Hungry, Women's Fund, Glam for Good and the Miami Diaper Bank. We're also about to announce an amazing partnership with Preferred Hotels and its CEO Lindsey Ueberroth.

Shawn: We are close to our end users and they are very charitable. We have supported many initiatives over the years, from breast cancer and diabetes awareness to Angels of Africa and more. Now that we're affiliated with Shopping Gives, our dynamic Anatomie ladies select things that we are supporting and donate to a great cause at checkout. We recently supported the Miami Diaper Bank. It is a fantastic organization.

What are the "5 Things You Need To Thrive As A Couple"? Please share a story or example for each.

Kate: Here is my checklist:

- Save time for adventure. Shawn and I work hard but always find time for little getaways, date nights and sleepovers 😊
- Separate your offices. We work pretty far from each other on a day-to-day basis and rarely go on calls or Zooms together for work. We try to stay in our lanes.
- Weekly meetings with Tom Dietrich, our COO. We always throw our operating partner in the mix so he can diplomatically make us fight through issues and get on the same page. We call this our balcony meeting. Sometimes they happen in the morning and sometimes for dinner, and then I always cook.
- Find time to laugh. It keeps us together and reminds us how far we've come.

Shawn: Running a business is difficult, being married with children is difficult, and the combined two is DIFFICULT.

- Work-life balance is not as easy as it sounds. Entrepreneur spouses run the risk of putting business first, especially when your business is growing fast. It is all intertwined. It is just management of your reactions to the present moment at home. When we have stressful news at home, we have a glass of wine. When we have the biggest day of online sales, we have a glass of wine. We like a good Amarone from Verona Italy. It works great under most circumstances.
- Clearly defined rolls and boundaries, focusing on core skillsets and trusting your partner will do their part. Not taking the workplace hierarchy to your home is important. It doesn't matter what your title is at work — that stays in the office.
- It is important for couples who work together to not take their home conflicts to the office or vice versa. I hold grudges. Kate is a lot better at letting go, and I have to remind myself not to take things personally and to focus on all of the amazing things that are happening with our business and personal lives.

- We were traveling a lot pre-COVID. We had time away from the business and recharged our batteries while on the road. You need the personal time to keep you healthy. Being on the hamster wheel day after day without a break is not good for anyone.
- I highly recommend a business and life coach. I am so fortunate to work with Susan Ford Collins. She is known as the CEO whisperer. Before working with her, I had assumed that it was going to be about maximum engagement and improving the bottom line, but our first session was about family and success. Simply writing in a small notebook about the positive things happening daily can shift your focus from the little things that aggravate you to the fruits of your hard work.

You are people of great influence. If you could inspire a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)

Kate: I would stop waste, and the excess use of paper and plastics. Shawn and I are scuba divers, and we really care about the ocean.

Shawn: I feel like COVID-19 was a reset for planet earth. Everything we take for granted in our daily lives were turned upside down. We were in lockdown and disconnected from family and friends. If we could inspire a movement, it would be one of travel and adventure. There are so many life changing-destinations, and we must make the journey to them while we can because there are no guarantees.

Can you please give us your favorite “Life Lesson Quote”? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?

Kate: Balance and routine create happier families with working parents and kids. I always make time for my daughter before and after school without looking at my phone and we adventure a lot together. Quick, short escapes go a long way! My life lesson quotes come from my Hungarian grandma so they are a little hard to translate, but one of her favorites was, “Never go to bed mad.” A day can bring in a lot of stress and it really does take an effort to let it go by bedtime.

Shawn: “When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.” — Viktor Frankl

We are very blessed that some of the biggest names in Business, VC funding, Sports, and Entertainment read this column. Is there a person in the world, or in the US with whom you would love to have a private breakfast or lunch with, and why? He or she might just see this if we tag them :-)

Kate: Yes, please! Richard Branson would be my pick. Bernard Arnault would be next. It’s so sad we lost Steve Jobs.

Shawn: I would love to meet Chip Wilson, the founder of Lululemon. I once spoke with a Canadian who had a conversation with Chip Wilson in his very first store. He said that Chip was so convinced that Lululemon was going to be an international brand that he thought he was crazy. The truth was that Chip knew exactly where he was heading.

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Visit Anatomie at www.anatomie.com and @Anatomiestyle on Instagram and Facebook. Search for Kate Boyer on LinkedIn. #anatomiestyle

We are based in Miami, FL near the Design District. If you’re in the area, we’d love to have you come in for a visit.

Thank you so much for joining us. This was very inspirational.