



MORNING BREW

ROUTINE

Lauren Maillian discusses health as key to better entrepreneurship

A change of pace—and geography—helped balance this serial entrepreneur's life.



Marta Skovro

By Sabrina Sanchez

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“I feel as though I’m the strategist and the consultant for the future world that we want to live in for women of color.”

Lauren Maillian is a serial entrepreneur, as well as CEO and board member of digitalundivided, a social organization dedicated to raising VC funding and promoting economic growth for Black and Latinx women entrepreneurs. She serves as an investor and advisor to several startups, including Ephemeral Tattoo, Kroma Wellness, and Ruggable.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Kickoff: “I wake up with natural sunlight, which has been a really big change in my life since we moved to Puerto Rico [from New York]. I get up and read the news while in bed—30 minutes of news and 10 minutes of gossip, because I have to find some balance. And then I have to start my day with working out, because I need to start, not at 100, but at 300. I’ve got to always show up with a certain level of energy, innovation, ideas, and strategies to create the change we want to see for Black and Latina women. Within innovation, venture capital, private equity, and tech it’s a completely different challenge than trying to just have more diverse faces in a room...we want to actually change not just what rooms look like but how systems are created and how opportunity is divided and shared.”

The not-so average, average day: “It’s a mix of touching base with my team, my chief of staff, and my strategic assistant, who’s helping me pinch hit on all things and stay organized. I speak to a lot of the decision makers—C-suite leaders, EVPs, SVPs at our banking partners, everyone from JPMorgan Chase to Prudential Silicon Valley Bank. We’ve got an incredible partnership with NASDAQ. [I’m remote] in Puerto Rico, so I’ve been traveling a lot, but I’m not complaining. It’s definitely a different way of life.”

Handling setbacks: “I’m really big on overcommunicating. I believe that a lot of people make assumptions that can be avoided with clear communication. We often panic around missteps or delays, and I’m someone who believes in intent. So as long as the intent was good and positive, I think you can always turn around missteps and delays with good communication.”

Passion project: “This is not just work, this is personal. It’s work that is emotionally draining, mentally draining. What I really love about the job is that it’s part marketing, branding, storytelling, shifting public perception by way of setting a living example, and changing the storylines in the narratives and the headlines that we see. But then continuing to make that kind of external change possible by the internal work that we do every day...[finding] the solutions that I personally have always thought would help shift the paradigm. And then to actually be able to put it into action and see the fruits of my labor come full circle has been incredible.”

Setting goals: “I just recently had a conversation with Daymond John of Shark Tank, and he says he reads his 10 goals every night before he goes to sleep. I’ve actually started doing that, and breaking down my goals into what’s achievable right away or on a monthly or quarterly basis, and others that are annual goals or 10-year goals or even lifetime goals.”

Finding balance: “In Puerto Rico, one of the most magical things about living here is that the culture prioritizes family over everything else. So I picked that up in the last almost two years of being here. It’s not a balance, it’s like a bifurcation of life. It’s about having my time to be a mom and a wife, and to [work] and have fun. It’s creating boundaries that you can respect and that other people have to learn to respect if they want to work with you. I don’t seek to have balance between those two. I very much seek to have separation between those two, so I can enjoy them both.”—SS