

Angela Awunor with Angyono Cakes

David Crabill: Welcome to the Forrager Podcast, where I talk with cottage food entrepreneurs about their strategies for running a food business from home. I'm David Crabill, and today I'm talking with Angela Awunor. But real quick, I wanted to check, have you created a website for your business yet? And if you have, do you pay for it?

[00:00:18] A lot of entrepreneurs still think they need to spend good money to get a good website, and that is simply not true anymore. I am a really big fan of Square Online. That's what I use for my fudge business' website, and I created Free tutorial that will walk you through how to set up a totally free website in less than one hour.

[00:00:35] And in case you think free also means cheap, it's actually quite the opposite. I think Square Online is hands down the very best website tool for most cottage food businesses. So if you want to learn more, you can watch my free tutorial by going to forrager.com/website. Alright, so I have Angela on the show today.

[00:00:52] She lives in Glenn Dale, Maryland and sells high end custom decorated cakes with her cottage food business, Angyono Cakes. Now, most people start their food business from home and eventually move into a commercial kitchen as they grow, but Angela did the exact opposite. When she started her business back in 2016, she chose to rent a commercial kitchen because Maryland's cottage food laws weren't very good back then.

[00:01:18] But when the laws improved, she decided to move her business into her home in 2019. Her business has gotten increasingly popular each year and now she has over 84, 000 followers on Instagram. And yet, this is still just a side business for Angela. She also has a full time job as an anesthesiologist and she has three kids as well.

[00:01:43] How does she make time for it all? And how has she become so successful in two all consuming careers? That's what you're about to learn in this episode. Welcome to the show, Angela. Nice to have you here.

[00:01:56] **Angela Awunor:** Thank you!

[00:01:58] **David Crabill:** So, Angela, can you take me back to the beginning of this journey? How did it all get started?

[00:02:03] **Angela Awunor:** My journey started in 2014. my son, was turning eight, and he asked for a wrestling ring cake. At that time, I'd never baked for my children. I didn't even bake box mixes. I didn't have a mixer. I didn't have any recipes. But for some strange reason, I decided that I was going to make him a cake.

[00:02:28] And so I searched, went on Google. I found different recipes. I took my notes, read reviews, and wrote down notes. What other people thought? I could add and remove. I bought me a mixer from Amazon his birthday was on a Wednesday. I remember I stayed up all night on Tuesday and made him this hideous looking cake we cut it Wednesday after work and he was so proud of it.

[00:02:54] He had this big smile on his face You know what? Let's do it again on Saturday. We'll invite your friends. I'll make another one. And so I did.

[00:03:03] SO the rest of 2014, I baked for my children. I have three children, so I baked for their birthdays. And when my daughter turned two in November, I took my time with her cake and made all the pieces and made her a cake.

[00:03:19] It looked like something. It looked good. so that's where my journey started. By the start of 2015, people began to notice and I got a lot of requests from people. So I did a lot of free cakes. I'll make you a cake. You don't tell me what to make. You don't even tell me the flavor. So I experimented with a lot of cakes.

[00:03:42] So people just they'll say, hey, my birthday is next week. I'm like, no problem. I'll get you a cake. So I, just practiced. I tried different techniques. I tried different recipes. And no one complained. They got free cake and I got to practice. So I did that for the first half of 2015. And by the... Fall of that year, I figured, okay, this is getting expensive, making all these free cakes.

[00:04:08] I looked into the rules in Maryland, and at that time, Maryland is a pretty strict state in terms of rules as to baking from your home. And at that time, you needed a commercial kitchen to be able to sell to people. Otherwise, if you wanted to sell your cakes, you could only sell them at farmer's markets.

[00:04:29] Trade shows, stuff like that. So I googled and I found a commercial space nine minutes from my home and I knew that was a sign. So I went for it. So I made it officially a business January 1st of 2016 and the rest is history.

[00:04:46] **David Crabill:** So, interesting that you were giving cakes away for free for the first half of 2015. And was that... Like with the idea that you might turn this into the business or was it just you were just doing it for fun?

[00:04:58] **Angela Awunor:** No, I was doing it for fun. I really enjoyed the creative part of making cakes. I always joked that if I was not in the field of healthcare, I would be an interior decorator. I always knew design. And I could design things and, but I never knew I could do it in sugar. And so when I started decorating cakes, it was pure joy.

[00:05:23] I really enjoyed the creative freedom I got from just making cakes from, for people without them telling me what they wanted. And I could really experiment and really create. So no, I did not know I was going to make it a business. It just evolved. The rest is history.

[00:05:41] **David Crabill:** so in 2016 you started by renting a commercial kitchen and I know you eventually moved back into your home. So can you sort of take us through that? Like was it like using a rented kitchen and when did you decide you didn't want to do that anymore and you wanted to move back home?

[00:05:58] **Angela Awunor:** So the commercial spaces I use were not very convenient. The first one I used had no equipment at all. All they gave you was a space with an oven so every time I had to use it, I had to bring in my mixer, I had to bring in everything I needed. And, you know, I just did it. I didn't have a lot of clients at that time, so it was okay, And he also just rented time. And there were other people using the space as well, not just bakers. I know at the time there was someone who made coffee, so it wasn't very convenient, but I had to do it just because of the rules in the state. I moved back home when Maryland changed the rules um, about, I want to say about three, Years ago, Maryland made it legal for you to use your home address as a business address.

[00:06:51] So that gave me the confidence to move back home. Even at that time, when the rules changed, I still didn't move home immediately. I was still nervous because at that time I had A lot of clients from out of Maryland, so they were from Virginia and D. C. And the rules in Maryland is if you bake from home, you cannot sell outside of Maryland.

[00:07:14] So that bothered me. I'm like, okay, I have this client who ordered from me. Then again, I'm like, wait a minute, they come into Maryland to pick up their cakes. I really, you know, wherever they take the cake, I really don't

know. So, then I gave myself permission to move back home, and I'm glad I did because it was more convenient for me.

[00:07:33] with me working full time. It was so much easier to work from home.

[00:07:38] **David Crabill:** And then, you didn't choose to use your own kitchen in your home, right? You actually built the space.

[00:07:44] **Angela Awunor:** Yes, I did. So I built this space while I was still in a commercial space. As time, as the years went by, I had acquired a lot of equipment. I had a lot of stuff and I needed a place to store them. I was still in a commercial space at that time. So that kitchen was built not out of the need to bake out of it.

[00:08:07] It was out of the need to store my, my treasures, my equipment. that's why I built that space. so I built it the summer, right before the rules changed. So It was an amazing coincidence, so I did that in the summer, and by the fall, Maryland changed the rules, and the following year, I moved back home.

[00:08:24] **David Crabill:** So now you're operating under the cottage food law, but did it ever occur to you to like create your space in your home as a commercial kitchen?

[00:08:35] **Angela Awunor:** I did, so I did call my county, So when I moved back home, I called them and I asked them, I had a separate kitchen, and I would love them to inspect it, and I was told they do not inspect homes, so that was out of the question. that is not an option in Maryland.

[00:08:54] **David Crabill:** Oh, that's interesting. So you'd have to have it be like a separate building on your property?

[00:08:58] **Angela Awunor:** No, it cannot even be on my property. It has to be a commercial space.

[00:09:04] **David Crabill:** Okay, so like it has to be a commercial

[00:09:06] zone in your city.

[00:09:08] **Angela Awunor:** Yes.

[00:09:10] **David Crabill:** I had not heard that one before. That sounds pretty

[00:09:13] restrictive.

[00:09:14] **Angela Awunor:** Maryland is very, very restrictive.

[00:09:16] **David Crabill:** So you said that the commercial kitchens weren't really conducive to your baking. When you set up your home space, what did you learn from the commercial kitchens that you put into creating your space at home?

[00:09:31] **Angela Awunor:** for one, I didn't have a large space to work with. I was working with a small storage room. so my goal was to make it, it was a small space, but my goal was to make it Flow, to make my better if I had to use it. So my goal was, again, I created that space for storage. So my big thing was finding space to store things.

[00:09:58] And as we built the space. I really didn't have a clear picture of what it was going to be, so we built it as we went along. so I tried to put things where it made more sense, because it was a small room, so it had to make sense. I wasn't trying to mimic a commercial space, because I didn't have the room for that.

[00:10:17] I just wanted to maximize the little space I had.

[00:10:22] **David Crabill:** now, I know you said that it was really nice to be able to work out of your home because you have a full time job. So what is your day job?

[00:10:28] **Angela Awunor:** I am a doctor of nurse anesthesia practice. So I'm a nurse anesthesiologist. So I work a full time job where I put people to sleep for a living for surgeries. And, um, so I, I love that. And I've been asked so many times, when are you going to quit this job and just focus on baking? And that's where my dilemma is.

[00:10:49] I don't want to quit my job. I love my job. Baking was never a dream of mine. It was something very accidental and something I found that I was good at. And so I'm trying to find a balance where I could do both without giving up on both.

[00:11:06] **David Crabill:** I mean anesthesia. I mean, it just it just seems like one of the most extreme medical professions you can be and it seems like one of the most stressful professions you can be in.

[00:11:17] **Angela Awunor:** Yes, it is. So that's why, I got so attracted to it. So it became my happy place. So when I walk away from the hospital and I come home and I have to bake, I'm in a different zone. I'm happy, especially when I'm creating and I have built this business in such a way that my clients trust me enough to give me creative freedom.

[00:11:39] And so no matter how tired I am, how exhausted I am. As soon as I start decorating, I just get a high from it. It's like an addiction of some sorts.

[00:11:51] **David Crabill:** When I think of like an anesthesiologist, my perception is this is somebody that is a perfectionist, right? Like they have to be a perfectionist. Would you say that's true?

[00:12:02] **Angela Awunor:** yes, we are usually type A personalities. You become very aware of a lot of things you pay attention to the smallest. While you're behind those drapes, while surgery is going on, you're listening to every sound, you're listening to the monitors change tone, you're listening to the surgeon suctioning, and you're constantly listening to every conversation.

[00:12:28] So I bring that home with me when I bake as well, when I create, I pay attention to the fine details. I'm watching everything. Um, Yeah, we're type A personalities. We're perfectionists.

[00:12:42] **David Crabill:** I mean, I can definitely see that attention to detail in your cakes, but what I'm wondering is like with cakes, you can spend. Hours and hours and hours on a cake and it still won't be perfect, right? So like, how do you find the balance between like that perfectionist side of you and just like getting the cakes done?

[00:12:58] **Angela Awunor:** There's some cakes I still create that I feel like, meh, I don't like the way it looks but I just let it go because now I've learned that it's usually me because people will see it and they'll go, oh my goodness, that's amazing. That is great. There's some cakes I'll post and the way people Google Gaga over it, I'm like, huh?

[00:13:17] Have they not seen what I see? So over the years, I've just learned that I am harder on myself than anything, than anyone else is. I have just learned to let things be. I really have. There are times I'll be decorating and I

have to tell myself stop, stop touching, walk away. just have to tell myself to walk away from it and I constantly have to remind myself.

[00:13:40] It's hard, but I have to remind myself. To leave it alone, because usually it's just fine.

[00:13:45] **David Crabill:** The other thing I think about like an anesthesiologist is an extremely consistent person. Like people's lives depend on you to be consistent. So I can see that's the case in your cakes too. Like how is that transferred over into the business?

[00:14:04] **Angela Awunor:** with my job, I have to be consistent. I have to be reliable. I have to be trusted. It is very important to me when I meet a patient, before I take them back, it is so important that I have a rapport with them, that they trust me. And I try to bring that over with my cakes. I want you to trust me.

[00:14:21] I want you to know that. With every cake I put out there, it's going to be consistently the same standard. And that's very important to me. Very, very important to me.

[00:14:31] **David Crabill:** Now this is sort of off topic, but. I'm just curious because, you know, you're obviously in the healthcare field, involved with surgeries. What was it like, you know, going through the pandemic?

[00:14:41] **Angela Awunor:** so at the time of the pandemic, I worked with the military. So

[00:14:46] I always say we were Sheltered. We were protected from it all. But did I work a lot? Yes, I worked the most hours that I've ever worked and I baked the most cakes that I've ever baked because it seemed like everyone was home and everyone was celebrating the smallest things. I baked the most and I made the most money that year.

[00:15:08] **David Crabill:** Well, that's really surprising because you, I mean, you clearly have a niche in wedding cakes, like, you know, very elegant wedding cakes. And we know a lot of wedding cakes weren't happening in 2020, so, you know, it sounds like you were making smaller cakes.

[00:15:23] **Angela Awunor:** there were a lot of small cakes. Yes, people were celebrating with small cakes. They were going all the way. They were celebrating every birthday. This was not just milestone celebrations anymore. It

was everything. People had a reason to celebrate everything. So, I was baking small cakes, a lot of small cakes.

[00:15:42] **David Crabill:** Now, like, your style is very elegant, like, very high end type of cake. Can you just describe sort of like, your style, your cake style?

[00:15:52] **Angela Awunor:** So I've always thought about this. What is really my style? Because people keep saying, we keep hearing, Oh, you have to have a niche. You have to have, your ideal client. When I first started this, I just wanted to make cakes. I just wanted to learn every technique I could learn. but I always wanted them to be pretty. I didn't think I had a particular style. I really didn't think so. I think that has evolved in the last couple of years. Cause I remember when I first started, I used to sculpt a lot. I thought that was where my love was. I sculpted a whole bunch of cakes at that time.

[00:16:25] And I don't sculpt as much now. But the whole wedding cake, I have fallen in love with the elegant look, the tall cakes. I have truly fallen in love with those. And I'm like, this is it. And over this weekend, I remember saying to myself, I think I have found, I had a lot, I did a live yesterday and I said, I am committed to tall cakes.

[00:16:43] That is my brand. My cakes have to be tall. They have to be elegant. So that evolved over time. it wasn't always that way. And yes, I always made pretty cakes, but I just was not sure where my heart was. And when I first started also, I did a lot of fondant cakes. I didn't learn with buttercream.

[00:17:02] I learned with fondant and over the last few years, I had to go back. And teach myself buttercream. And now I am so in love with buttercream. And a lot of clients love buttercream. But because a lot of cake artists are not comfortable with buttercream, they will do a lot of designs in fondant.

[00:17:24] And now, am so proud to say, yes, I'll tell my clients I can do that in buttercream. That's not a big deal. That can be achieved. And a lot of wedding cakes also, especially when they're tall and multi tiered, they're usually dummy cakes. And just because The height, it's heavy. So it's safer to make them dummies and just have a, cutting cake at the back and have a, just a little piece for the couple to cut.

[00:17:50] But I'm trying to push for, I can make it all cake and I can make it in buttercream. Yes, I still do fondant and cake. So I think my style now is tall. Elegant. And it could either be buttercream or fondant because a lot can be

achieved with buttercream. So that's where a lot of my clients are leaning towards.

[00:18:07] They're leaning towards buttercream cakes. So I guess I'm a buttercream artist now.

[00:18:12] **David Crabill:** Yeah, I would definitely say your style is the tall cakes. Uh, a lot of people are gonna think, oh, tall means like a lot of tiers. But no, these tiers are tall. Like each, it's a very, very unique look. you know, I'm sure people will look at your, Instagram feed and see your cakes, but it's, it's definitely pretty unique.

[00:18:30] I'd also say uh, another thing I see a lot in your cakes is a lot of gold.

[00:18:34] **Angela Awunor:** A lot of my clients love gold. It's usually not me. It's them. They love gold and I will use gold. And I think gold and to me, gold is elegance. Gold is royalty. And They love it. I love it. I always try to, you know, challenge myself when they come up with a goal, then something came up, I was like, perfect.

[00:18:57] I will try to make it different. And that's another goal of mine. Try to make it different from what I've done before. So they have a unique cake, just uniquely their own.

[00:19:07] **David Crabill:** So you obviously have this like elegant. Niche, high end niche, and you don't do a whole lot of kids cakes now, it doesn't look like, but it looks like you did a lot more in the past. Was that because of the pandemic, or, like, where did that transition come in?

[00:19:22] **Angela Awunor:** I did a whole lot in the past and lately. I still do kids cakes and I make it very clear. I will not recreate the characters. We will use toys. The client is going to buy the toys at cost, and I will place them on the cake, just because of copyright rules.

[00:19:41] So I still make kids cake. I try to make them look nice and elegant. And if you can make kids cakes elegant, but I do them, but I just don't get a lot of requests for them anymore.

[00:19:52] So I guess always say what you attract what people see really. So I think, Yeah. there's certain trends people never ask me for. I never get requests for them. So a lot of the trending cakes, I don't get requests for them. I think because people don't see them on my page, so they don't ask for them.

[00:20:12] So it's not like they ask for them, I make them and I don't post them now. They just don't ask for them. So I am a big believer is people will order what they see. So, I'm trying to attract. The client who wants that tall, elegant look. So hopefully it's working. So far it is working. I'm not getting a lot of requests for cakes that I really don't want to, I don't enjoy.

[00:20:37] So right now the heart cake is a big one now. I don't have any requests for heart cake. No one's asking me for them. And so I'm happy about that. But I'm like, I don't want to be like everybody else. I don't want to do what everyone's doing. So that's where I am.

[00:20:50] **David Crabill:** with this very elegant, high end niche comes Probably a very high end price. So what are you pricing your cakes at right now?

[00:21:00] **Angela Awunor:** when I first started. I started right out \$6 a slice, so that's where I started. Now, I am at \$8 and up a slice. \$8 a slice all across, not just wedding cakes, all across the board. And the more complicated and the more detailed they are, the higher. So wedding cakes now run \$1,000 and up, depending on the serving size.

[00:21:23] So, a cake to feed a hundred will start around 1, 300, just depending on the, design, it goes up from there,

[00:21:35] **David Crabill:** One thing that I know is going into the cost of your cake because I saw pinned on your Instagram feed your, buttercream recipe was a quarter cup of vanilla in each batch. And this is real vanilla, right?

[00:21:48] **Angela Awunor:** Yes, so I make it myself, and um, yes, pricey,

[00:21:52] a quarter cup of my vanilla cost me 6 dollars. So that's where my cost comes from.

[00:21:59] **David Crabill:** With making your own vanilla, isn't that a pretty time intensive process? Like, you have to, like, let it sit for a long time, right?

[00:22:06] **Angela Awunor:** So yes, that is the traditional way of making vanilla. So I do cheat. I have a, I cheat using the pressure cooker method. And I can get vanilla in a week rather than in a year.

[00:22:19] **David Crabill:** Okay, that makes a big difference because, you know, you can't really prepare, like plan out your orders that far in advance,

[00:22:26] **Angela Awunor:** right. So that has really helped me. I've been making my own vanilla now for over three years and I've never looked back. It's, a world of a difference in the taste of everything.

[00:22:35] **David Crabill:** Where are you sourcing like your vanilla beans and all your ingredients from?

[00:22:40] **Angela Awunor:** I get my vanilla beans from a company called Native Vanilla. They source their vanilla from farmers, so I'm able to buy wholesale from them. And, um, most of my ingredients are from Restaurant Depot, and the things I don't buy at Restaurant Depot, I buy at Costco.

[00:22:58] So, Costco, I buy my eggs from, just because the eggs at Restaurant Depot are, They're not normal. They always have double yolks and it was really affecting the extra liquid was really affecting my recipes. So that's why I had to go to Costco to get it. But otherwise, majority of my ingredients come from Restaurant Depot, Costco.

[00:23:19] And I have other little places online where I buy things from in bulk.

[00:23:24] But yeah That's where my cost is coming from, my ingredients. So I do bake from scratch. Yes, it may be cheaper to use a box mix, but I, I, when I first started, I never used the box mix. I went straight to baking from scratch and I have continued to do that.

[00:23:40] I had an experiment last, December. And I said, you know what, let me try a box mix and see how it works. And I bought a 50 pound bag. I didn't even go with a box, little boxes. I went straight to a 50 pound bag. And I had a special a Christmas special. And I felt like a fraud because I felt so horrible offering this I got a lot of great reviews from it, and I just wanted to see, because I always play toy with the idea of, I'm going to get to a point where I can't bake from home anymore, because Maryland is very restrictive, they're very restrictive on how much money you can make from home.

[00:24:17] So which restricts how much, how many orders I can take. I now I'm trying to take quality orders so I don't exceed what I'm required to make from home. So I now know, I know at the back of my head, I have to move out of my home at some point. And so that's why I've had that experiment last December, just to see Because I would still like to keep the high end part of my business. And I, again, I'm like, if I open storefront, I may need to sell to the public. I may need to do some retail stuff.

[00:24:46] I don't really care for retail. I have never cared for retail. I just want to keep the custom part of my business.

[00:24:54] I think that's where my love is. Just keep it truly custom. But at the same time, when you open a storefront, then you have overhead, and now you have to think of all the costs. But again, I also have the option of just opening a small studio where I don't have to have retail, I just keep continuing to do my custom work and teach, because I've been getting a lot of requests to teach, and that is something I'm going to start doing in the new year.

[00:25:20] So I would love to have a space where I could do that.

[00:25:24] **David Crabill:** Talking about moving out of the home, was thinking maybe it was a space issue because I know, I could see it with the pictures, it's not that huge of a space and you have a massive amount of equipment in that little space it's like, it's actually really impressive, where you have like... six mixers or something like that.

[00:25:41] **Angela Awunor:** I think I have five in that room. I have two not in there. But yeah, it's impressive how much stuff I put in that little room and there's a refrigerator in that room as well. It's pretty impressive. So that's why I say, I always tell people, I tell my followers, it doesn't have to be a big space.

[00:25:59] You just have to know how to make use of the little space you have. And when I'm in there, I don't feel crowded. I don't feel like I have things everywhere. No, it's, everything is in order. And I think that makes it easier for me to work.

[00:26:14] **David Crabill:** Well, talking about like trying to, use a little space make it efficient, make it work for you. I, I noticed in your Instagram feed, like you're pretty good at like finding hacks and shortcuts finding ways to make things easier.

[00:26:27] What are some of those hacks you could share with

[00:26:28] us?

[00:26:29] **Angela Awunor:** I'm a lazy baker. I call myself a lazy baker. So I have very little time. So when I'm up baking, everyone's in bed. So when I, so let me tell you one, my day to you real quick. I leave the house before seven o'clock. I usually, now that I work closer to home, I'm home. And my goal is to be in bed by no later than 8.

[00:26:52] 30, 9. 00. Because if I have cakes to do, I have to be up between 12 midnight and 2am to start working. So I have a very short window. So I have Over time, I have learned to work smart, so some of the little hacks I guess everybody, most people do this, you know, I work with frozen cakes, so I'll bake, freeze my cakes.

[00:27:13] I work with frozen cakes. It makes it really quick to frost my cakes. Um, So for my oven I have two pizza trays at the very bottom of my oven just to keep because a lot of people complain about Some bakers only bake one pan of cake at a time and because they have cold spots in the oven. So, I'm like, no. So, I have two pizza trays at the very bottom of my oven to heat up.

[00:27:40] The oven and there's always a thermometer in there to keep, so I always know what my temperature is. that works pretty well. So I usually have an oven full of cakes and I'm baking no time. Another thing I do is with my cakes, most bakers will, so you notice I have a lot of pans. I don't need that many pans, but I have to have that many.

[00:28:00] So that way baking is a breeze. So My single tier cakes have five layers of cake in them. So I will bake them in five pans rather than bake in two and then two tall pans, then cut it in half. I'd rather bake in five pans. That have just enough batter in them to give me a layer. That way my cakes bake in tops 30 minutes.

[00:28:25] If it's a bigger pan, then I'll probably go in 35, 40 minutes, but my cakes don't take too long to bake. And that's why I have all those many pans., save me time.

[00:28:37] **David Crabill:** I also see you're a big fan of the cake safe.

[00:28:40] **Angela Awunor:** Oh my god, yes, that's a lifesaver. Man, I remember a time, I remember a time when I, so I got my first cake safe from a business that was going out of business, from a bakery that was going out of business. It was a small one, but I never used it, and it just sat there. before I got my first real cake safe, I love stacking my cakes before I get to the venue.

[00:29:04] So I had this wedding, I remember I had this wedding I had to drive 45 minutes And the problem was they wanted guests, because it was hot, it was summertime, guests will already be seated when I arrived to place a cake.

[00:29:19] So, if I don't have it completely stacked, that means I'll be stacking in front of the guests, and I really did not want to do that. So, I stacked this four

tier cake, and I didn't have a cake safe. But I placed it in that car and oh my God, my poor husband who was driving I screamed the whole way there with every move he made.

[00:29:38] I'm like screaming and we made it safely. And when I finally got my cake safe, I, I still didn't use it properly. I didn't use it with the rod. I still was not confident using it with the rod in the middle of it. So I would use it without the rod. But when I. got brave enough to stick that rod through that cake.

[00:29:58] It was the best thing I did because the first one of the first few times I used it with a rod, I was by myself with my daughter and I had a fully stacked cake in it. I was trying to lift it. It was so heavy, I couldn't. So I was trying to place it on a surface, but I did not clear the surface. I'm like telling my daughter, help me, help me, help me, but she really couldn't help me.

[00:30:18] And I didn't clear the surface and the whole cake safe tipped on its side. And I was like, oh my God. And when I picked it up, it was perfect. I was like, oh my, I would never, ever deliver a cake without the rod in it because that rod saved that cake. If I didn't have that rod in it that day, that cake would have been trash.

[00:30:40] So I'm a true believer of the cake safe. it's a blessing. I own four of them now and I would not deliver a wedding cake without it.

[00:30:51] **David Crabill:** I can see how especially with your like, super tall cakes, it's, it's essential.

[00:30:55]

[00:30:56] **David Crabill:** So on that subject any cake failures?

[00:31:01] **Angela Awunor:** Oh, cake failures. Let's see. had some that I've posted recently. You know, I, when I started recording my process, because I never used to record anything, and that changed this year. And when I started recording my process, things happen. But I always happen to fix them. One I posted was a military cake that I was trying to fix the top tier and in my effort to fix it, I picked it up and

[00:31:27] it fell so the good thing with me and one thing I pride myself in, I don't panic. And even when I'm working with students at work, I always tell them um, the room will follow your lead. When you panic, they all will panic. So I always tell them you need to have control of your room. And if things go

wrong, You need to stay under control because the moment you lose it, the whole room would lose it.

[00:31:56] So I carry that home with me. I usually don't panic even when things go wrong. When I have to start all over again, I have a straight face. I might be very upset at myself, but because I always say when you panic, you lose everything. But when you keep a leveled head, you're able to think and fix things.

[00:32:14] So That I use a lot in this business. Yes, things go wrong. so usually things that go wrong, I'm able to fix, but one that I was so sad about was a wedding from this year. When I walked into that venue, the room was hot. It And I remember telling the event designer, I'm like, the room is very hot.

[00:32:33] Is the AC on? She was like, yeah, the AC is on, but the doors, they keep opening the doors. So it's really warm. It was very warm. I should have just gone with my sixth sense because I was familiar with that venue. I know they have refrigerators. I could have, I should have insisted of just keeping it in the refrigerator for a little bit and waiting.

[00:32:53] I'd probably come back because I wasn't too far from the venue. I would have come back to place the cakes when it was way closer to the reception. But I went ahead and I placed it anyway. And, you know, I didn't hear anything. I was still concerned about how warm the room was. I didn't hear anything. It was later on that week I got a message from the bride.

[00:33:13] She was thanking me for her beautiful cake. And she goes, and just in passing, she goes They ate everything. And she was, we didn't even get to eat the top tier. And just like that, that's all she said. And I had to ask what happened to the top tier? And she was like, it fell. I'm like, it fell, how? I want pictures.

[00:33:31] You know, she was not even concerned about it. She was not upset. She was still like, so happy about her beautiful cake. And I was like, I need pictures. I need to see, So she sent me a picture. She was standing next to the cake. if you don't know how the cake looked, you would not have noticed anything was wrong with it.

[00:33:48] But half of the top tier slipped off and fell off. so it was just half of it left, and there were flowers there, so you really would not know. You just look like a short tear, and you know, that bothered me, and I'm like, oh my God, that

room was so warm. didn't take long for it to, you know, my buttercream to start melting.

[00:34:06] And that's also why I changed my practice also after that cake, because I usually would have a center dowel in all my cakes. but the center dowel does not have to come all the way to the top. As long as it was midway. Into the top tier. I was okay with that. But after that cake, I realized it was very important that my center dial went all the way to the top of the cake for situations like that, because the cake slipped exactly where the center dial stopped. So I changed my practice.

[00:34:36] **David Crabill:** Well fortunately you had a very gracious bride at that time. Have there been any upset customers?

[00:34:44] **Angela Awunor:** So, yeah, I had one this year. It was a very interesting case. So, I had a client, they came to me for a baby shower cake. I gave them the price of the cake they wanted and they came up with, no, we just want the cake plain. They didn't want any decorations on it. They just wanted a plain cake, so they gave me colors and that was it.

[00:35:05] I was like, okay, they were trying to save cost and I'm like, fine. So I did that and it so happened that on the same weekend, I had another baby shower cake with almost a similar theme as to what they wanted, you know, what they initially wanted, but different colors. Theirs was for a boy. The other cake was for a girl.

[00:35:26] The other cake was a gold and cream cake. Theirs was blue with some browns in it. So, I made both cakes. cake was first. I posted a video of it and I get a message from someone I had no clue who they were. The person was so excited. Oh my God, that's my cake. Send me a video of it. And I'm thinking, who are you?

[00:35:47] Because I knew the people, who ordered the girl cake. So I got concerned. I'm like, oh my goodness, this is the mother to be of the boy cake that whoever ordered it wanted to eat plain. I was like, she's too excited.

[00:36:01] She thinks her cake is all jazzed up. And I'm like, but that doesn't make any sense. This is a girl cake. The teddy bear was a girl on it. Like, well, why would she get excited for a cake that wasn't even her color? So that got me really worried. so I. I explained to this person, I'm like, oh, no, this is not your cake.

[00:36:18] I'm making another cake. It is blue and brown, but it is plain. It has no decorations on it, And I didn't get any response. I figured, okay, whoever ordered the cake was probably going to put decorations on and jazz it up, because I didn't think they would leave the cake sitting there plain. But they picked up the cake and all.

[00:36:36] And I hear back, she's very upset. They didn't like the cake. I'm like, but you ordered a plain cake with just color. I don't know what else. With you being excited about a cake that wasn't even yours, you know, that really was concerning to me. But anyway, she went ahead and left a review. She came on telling me how she's going to leave a review.

[00:36:56] I'm going to go deliver. I say, please do, because it's important that. I'd be able to respond to you. So she did leave a negative review and I was able to respond to her because that's one thing that's very important to me. You always, you're entitled to your side of the story, but I want to be able to respond to you because I want people to be able to see how I respond to you.

[00:37:16] And because I am, I, one thing that's very important to me also is I keep Details. I try to keep every information, every communication, everything we talk about. I try to keep everything. So I'm not afraid of a negative comment. I'm very open. Give me a comment and, you know, leave a review and I'll be able to respond to you. So

[00:37:37] She left her review, I left my reply, and I moved on, and that was it. And another one I had say it was another strange cake. The design, they came up with the design. Um, It was very weird. The cake had a lot of elements on it, a lot of strange things. And this client, was ordering from out of state.

[00:37:56] He told me the person he was ordering from was my fan. A lot of strange things. Anyway, I went ahead, decorated this cake and, um, prior to the pickup, I kept getting messages. It was around Christmas. Can I see the cake? How far have you gone? It is five days away. I don't have anything done.

[00:38:17] I don't decorate like that. so again, that was that, you know, was a red flag for me. But anyhow, the cake was picked up by an Uber when I showed the final picture, because I always send a picture. Always, always, always, always, always send a picture. He loved it. He was thankful and Patreon. I sent a message right away after the cake left, a few, about a few hours after, did the cake arrive safely?

[00:38:41] No response. The next day, how did the cake go? No response. Then a month later, I get this email how A month later, how the person who got the cake was not happy with the cake. And I'm like, this is so weird. And I love to keep documentation. I had all my documentation. So I sent a very, very long email stating the date when what was said, when I sent the picture, his response.

[00:39:13] It was such a long email and I sent it to him and I never hear heard back again. So that's why it's so important. A paper trail is very important. I think that is key for a lot of small businesses, especially home bakers. We get a lot of orders. Some people get orders online and they do DMs and do telephone. I want it to be in writing because, and I always never delete anything because I can go back and show you emails from many years ago. so I'm able to pull those in and I'm like, Nope, this is not what was said. And this is what was said. So.

[00:39:46] **David Crabill:** experience like that affect like what kind of orders you'll take, like if there are red flags like that, you just, back out of it now.

[00:39:54] **Angela Awunor:** so with those two experiences, the red flags didn't pop up until after the order was taken. have been hard for me to not take it. I'm still going to continue to take just custom work and usually when clients come in and say they want this exact cake, the answer is always a no.

[00:40:14] You can't go, you know, it's always a no, I'm not going to do it. And, I'm still going to take the cakes that I enjoy to create. I'm still going to take the cakes. I really can't sift the bad experiences until you're in the process of making the cake. That's usually when those things happen. So.

[00:40:33] Yeah, I'm just going to continue to take things that I enjoy, that fit my brand, and in the hopes that the clients that come to me are truly my ideal clients.

[00:40:43] **David Crabill:** So what are some of your favorite cakes that you've done?

[00:40:46] **Angela Awunor:** I enjoy everything I make, so I don't take anything I don't like to make. So everything I create, I truly enjoy. Um, let's see. Okay, my children, now they, I think they're over me now with this whole cake thing. But when they were much younger, a few years ago, they will always tell me what to create, especially my daughter.

[00:41:05] My daughter would draw. She'll draw her cake. And when she was turning seven, she's gonna be 11 in a few weeks. When she was turning seven,

she drew a cake and It was an upright cake. It was a four tier cake, and she told me it had to be all cake. And I kept telling her, we're not having a party, though.

[00:41:22] You're just turning seven. I can't make a four tier with all cake. And at that time, I was planning for a bridal show for, for a hotel, and my plan was to go do a cake that was upside down, hanging upside down. And my daughter was there while we were having this meeting with some other vendors, and she stood there, she was staring at the prototype I had, and she goes, I want my cake upside down. And I'm like, no way, I'm not doing that. And the other vendors, they were like you have to do it. And I was like, no, don't encourage her. And I ended up doing it. And that cake is very dear to me. That cake is on my website right now. And it is a four tier old cake and it's upside down. It's hanging upside down.

[00:42:10] I'm truly proud of that one. I am truly proud of that one. I recently, last year I made a, I traveled with a five tier cake for my parents 50th anniversary. I was truly proud of that as well. That was very dear to me.

[00:42:24] **David Crabill:** I saw that one and I saw that you took it on the plane.

[00:42:28] **Angela Awunor:** Yeah. I took it separated on the plane. So we all had a cake. So I have three children, myself and my husband. So everybody had a cake as a carry on. And, um, yeah, I think the ones that are truly dear to me are usually the personal ones. And, um, this year I had my 28th wedding anniversary and I made a 23 inch tall cake. And I was proud of that one, too.

[00:42:54] **David Crabill:** so you have kids how many kids do you have?

[00:42:58] **Angela Awunor:** I have three.

[00:42:59] **David Crabill:** Three. And you started this when they were pretty young, right? So you've got a full time job, you've obviously got this cake business, you've got kids, like how do you find all the time to do all this?

[00:43:14] **Angela Awunor:** So I don't need a lot of sleep. I'm able to function with very little sleep, which is so weird. But staying organized really keeps me sane. I try to keep an organized home, and I have taught my children to be very independent. They've been very independent for a long time. Independent in the sense that they can do a lot of things on their own. I introduced all of my children to the stove at age eight. they learn to turn on the stove and start, doing things while I'm standing there. Then we go to the next stage where you can

turn on the stove, but I have to be in the house. Then they get to the stage where I don't have to be in the house and they can turn on the stove. So my kids are very comfortable in the kitchen. They are. Confident cooks, so that really truly helps when no one is asking, what am I going to eat now? Yes, no one is doing that. there's always food in the fridge, so they're always able to fix something.

[00:44:08] They're able to do their laundry on their own. They've been able to do their laundry on their own for a long time. They're able to clean their rooms. They're able to clean their bathroom. So, they do their little chores that makes my life so much easier. in terms of schoolwork, I got my children. So when you hit sixth grade, I don't check your homework anymore. So from kindergarten or however, when you start bringing home homework, I will check your homework every day up until you hit sixth grade and at sixth grade, hope is you have learned something that you're able to sit and do your homework.

[00:44:43] So my kids, when I come home after sixth grade and up, I just come home. Have you done your homework? Yes, we have. No problem. I don't check it anymore. they know I'm going to check your grades are going to tell me. And, I have pretty good students, my oldest is 19, he's a sophomore at Penn State, an excellent student. I have a 17 year old, a senior in high school, and he's an excellent student. So now I'm working on my daughter, she is in the fifth grade, so hopefully next year I'm going to let her loose and let her go. and because I really need to get them ready for high school. So that's why this whole sixth grade thing happened.

[00:45:18] I'm like, I need to get them ready. So that way they're responsible for their homework and stuff. So it has worked perfectly well for the first two. So we'll see how it goes with my daughter. So keeping an organized home is the key to being able to do it all, doing it all.

[00:45:35] **David Crabill:** You've made it work, you found the time, but do you feel, like, overwhelmed a lot of the times?

[00:45:40] **Angela Awunor:** overwhelmed, no. Because I have truly learned that if it's too much, I will take a break. I really do. I tell my followers, I'm like, because I, I see a lot of bakers, they'll come on and they'll tell you they're taking a break from baking. And I tell my followers, I do take breaks, but you just would never know it. I try not to let the pressures of social media get to me. I try not to let that control my life. So if I need a break from stuff I do, um, if I need a break from work, I'll take time off. I really do. I do take time off and if I feel like I just need to just lay on my couch and just sleep, I'll do that.

[00:46:27] So no, I try not to let things overwhelm me. I've been very good about, so one thing about me, I work very, very well under pressure. Very, very well. I don't, internalize stress. I never have. So I've been able to, if I if it's too much, I don't do it. If I need help, I will seek help from people to help me do stuff.

[00:46:51] So if I feel like I need extra help, in my home, I'll get people to come do stuff for me in the house. I have learned that over time. It wasn't always that way. I always wanted to do everything, but I have learned. I have matured. I have evolved where if I need help, I'll find the help.

[00:47:07] **David Crabill:** So let's talk about your social media following, cause you have now over 84, 000 Instagram followers. What have you learned, like, how have you gotten to that point?

[00:47:18] **Angela Awunor:** Just being consistent. Instagram is so finicky. You absolutely do not know what's going to work because I really cannot figure out. Yes, the analytics are there for you to re look. I never do. I never look at nothing. I just post what I need to post and keep it moving because I'm like, this app is not going to control my life.

[00:47:37] Last year, I left the military, working for the military, and I had some time on my hands. before I transitioned to my new job, and during that time, I just posted stuff. because I do all my recording on my phone, I all my editing on my phone. So, and it's really easy for me to edit stuff real quick. So, I was posting stuff. If I post it, I'll post like... 10 times a day, I just post whatever I wanted to post. And that's when the whole page took off. And it was around also at that time, I started recording everything. And I usually, I did not used to record, but I started recording my process and I found, oh. They like to see me do this. And so I just started posting stuff and just stay consistent. It comes and goes. Sometimes it's like you're up there, your views are up. The other times it's low. I don't care. I don't, it doesn't matter to me. I'm just going to post. I'll keep posting and I just stay consistent.

[00:48:36] **David Crabill:** Has reaching 84, 000 followers been something that's gradually increased over time, or did you go viral at some point to get a massive uptick?

[00:48:46] **Angela Awunor:** Yeah, I did go viral right around this time last year and it. Just took off from there. So I sometimes I'll go to Home Depot and I'll find little tools I feel like I could use in my kitchen. So I have this tool. it's a square. had this video where I had two squares on. A cake tier. that went viral.

[00:49:09] I was like, really? Yeah, that one went viral. I was like, wow, it's just a square. I think there was another one where I painted a cake gold and that too, just a technique. I was like, oh, okay. Then there was another where it was a black and gold cake. It was an Africa cake and that too. It was just a, To me, it was just a simple cake, but that too, so it was just, yeah, there were multiple, there's still a few, you know, there are multiple of them that just picked interest in people and that's where I grew.

[00:49:42] David Crabill: Oh, I've seen a picture of that Africa cake, it definitely stands out. Um, Also, I'd say, for some reason, the lion cake really stands out to me.

[00:49:52] **Angela Awunor:** Oh yeah, that was that too at one point.

[00:49:55] **David Crabill:** So, you have a ton of Instagram followers, obviously. Are these your clients, or are they just, you know, people who like following you online?

[00:50:05] **Angela Awunor:** A lot of them are bakers and just people interested in baking. I do have some clients in there because I have orders come from Instagram. But a lot of them are the bakers. so when This whole push for me to teach because I've been getting a lot of requests for me to teach.

[00:50:22] when this whole push came along, I said, okay, maybe I need to grow a community. And if I'm going to teach, these are the people I'm going to teach, bakers. so that's when I started doing the Sunday lives. So I do a live on Sunday at about eight o'clock. And we just talk about baking stuff and just, there's nothing scripted.

[00:50:43] They pretty much guide me and ask questions and I just answer. Sometimes I'll do I'll decorate cakes on there. So, just, it's just easy. Free, ask a question and we go from there. And so I do that every Sunday because I felt like I needed to build a community if I'm going to start teaching. so we'll see.

[00:51:04] But the whole, I'm really working, we're working on my new website so that way I can start doing my teaching on there, on my site. And we'll see how that goes. One thing really unique that I saw with your Instagram feed is you have not posted anything other than a reel for over a year.

[00:51:25] know that's crazy. I was looking at that. I was like, man, I need to post pictures. I'm like, I don't even take pictures anymore. I'm like, that's not

good. I need to start taking pictures again. Yeah, I've been doing reels. I guess I need to mix it up, but

[00:51:41] **David Crabill:** Well, hey, you got over 84, 000 followers, so I guess,

[00:51:46] **Angela Awunor:** it's working.

[00:51:47] **David Crabill:** I guess you're giving Instagram what they want.

[00:51:50] **Angela Awunor:** Yeah, I figured once I got over the whole making a reel thing, I was like, oh, it's not hard at all, just do a little clip. And once I got comfortable with that, that was all I could do. And it's so easy because it's on my phone. So I can edit a video in seconds, really fast. And I can post one. So, yeah, it's easy.

[00:52:10] **David Crabill:** So, are clients typically finding you through social media, or how do new customers generally find you?

[00:52:18] **Angela Awunor:** So a majority of my clients find me from Google. So they Google cakes around me, bakeries around me. And that's where I pop up. And I always knew it was something I discovered. Because I always say, why do people not tell you this stuff? I don't know how I got into Google, but Years ago, I discovered I needed a Google My Business account.

[00:52:39] So I created a Google My Business account and I started having my clients give me reviews there. And I haven't done this lately, but before I will post the picture on Instagram, I will first post it to Google. So Google will see it first before Instagram would see it. And I got a lot of my clients from there.

[00:52:58] I built this business from strangers, so a lot of people are like, oh, family and friends. No, family and friends didn't patronize me. It was strangers who grew my business. So I always tell. Bakers, make sure you have a Google My Business account because I feel like the clients that are able to afford what I, my cakes, are usually not on Instagram.

[00:53:20] They don't have Instagram accounts. they need something, they'll go to Google and ask Google for stuff. So that's the where my clients are coming from. Do I get some orders off of Instagram? Yes, I do. I made a wedding cake recently, a golden white wedding cake that was so huge, a huge golden white cake, and um, it was a four tier that fed 300 people, and they found me on Instagram.

[00:53:44] I don't know who the bride and groom, who they were. I never met them. I never talked to them, but their planner came to me on Instagram, and they picked up samples. I didn't even have a sit down consultation with them. the planner came over, picked up samples, and they booked me. The same day they tasted the cake.

[00:54:03] So yes, I do get some clients. I do get even international clients. there was a client that would order pretty frequently from overseas for someone here in the States. And so I do get clients from Instagram, but the majority of my clients do come from Google because I always say my ideal clients, some of them do not have Instagram accounts.

[00:54:24] **David Crabill:** Just thinking about your business journey and it's pretty accidental, right? Like you sort of stumbled upon this when you started making cakes for your kids in 2014 and now it's become this pretty full fledged business. Um, I mean, what keeps you going with the business? You don't have a whole lot of time, obviously.

[00:54:47] Like, why do you love running it?

[00:54:50] **Angela Awunor:** I think, my drive comes from the pleasure I derive from it, the pleasure I derive from creating. I love it so much that I was talking to my husband recently and I said I can't stop now. And he goes, no, you can't. I have come so far that I cannot walk away from it. I always said right from the beginning, I said a door was opened.

[00:55:13] I remember I said this when I. Googled and I found a commercial kitchen nine minutes from my house and I said, God has opened a door and I have to walk through it. I'll be truly ungrateful if I don't walk through that door. And so that's where this journey is. this whole journey has been a journey of faith.

[00:55:32] I don't know where I'm going with it. I still say I don't know where I'm going. I've come this far, but I still don't know where I'm going with it. I don't know where it's going to take me. But it's been a journey of faith. A door was opened and I had to walk through it. And I think that's what keeps me going.

[00:55:48] I think the unknown. I'm excited to see what that is. It can only get better from here. So it's the pleasure, the joy I derive from it. It brings me so much joy. It brings me so much peace. That's why I keep going.

[00:56:02] **David Crabill:** you've talked about potentially, you know, going storefront. you don't really have a strong sense of. Where you'd like to go in the future though.

[00:56:12] **Angela Awunor:** my head, I think I would love to have A studio, not necessarily open to the public. No, it doesn't have to be open to the public. I just want a space where I can meet my clients, a space where I could teach, and a space where I could create. That's what I have in my head, but I really I'm not sure if that's the direction I am supposed to go though, but I feel like whatever direction I'm supposed to go, it will be revealed to me.

[00:56:42] It will, it will come to me. But in my head right now, I, I feel like I just want a space where I could create, I could teach and where my clients, I can meet my clients.

[00:56:55] **David Crabill:** So I know you're eyeballing doing a lot more teaching in the coming year And you've already done a lot of teaching. So what's some advice that you would give to somebody who is starting their cake business journey right now?

[00:57:08] **Angela Awunor:** I would say soak everything you can. so it all depends on how people learn. So for me, I have not been to a class yet. I've not taken a class with anyone. I soaked everything I had to soak in and learn from online. There's a lot of resources online. Take advantage. You don't have to take expensive classes just yet.

[00:57:31] There's so much you can learn online and you just practice. You need to practice. It will not come easy, but you have to practice. And with every kick you do, you get better. With every design you make, with every technique, you get better. Yeah, some people feel like, oh, I don't have this. I don't, you don't need a lot of fancy equipment because we're so bad about buying every single thing we see.

[00:57:58] You know, someone's advertising something, we're ready to buy it. Then we buy it and we never use it. You don't have to buy a lot of things. You just need the basics. And learn. There's so much resources out there. You can learn a lot online. That's what I did. I did all my learning online and I practiced a lot on people's cakes at the beginning and you just need to build your confidence.

[00:58:22] And then once you build your confidence, the doors just open, you'll become very fearless and it becomes very easy. Sure does.

[00:58:32] **David Crabill:** Well, you make it look easy. Uh, Thank you so much Angela for coming on and sharing all that advice with us. Now, if people would like to learn more about you where can they find you or how can they reach out?

[00:58:47] **Angela Awunor:** You can find me on my website at angyonocakes.com, A-N-G-Y-O-N-O-C-A-K-E-S.com, or I'm on Instagram as [@angyono_cakes](https://www.instagram.com/angyono_cakes), [A-N-G-Y-O-N-O underscore cakes](https://www.instagram.com/A-N-G-Y-O-N-O_underscore_cakes). Or you can send me an email to admin@angyonocakes.com.

[00:59:12] **David Crabill:** Well, thank you so much Angela for coming on the show and sharing with us today.

[00:59:17] **Angela Awunor:** Thank you. Thank you so much.

[00:59:21] **David Crabill:** And that wraps up another episode of the Forrager Podcast. For more information about this episode, go to forrager.com/podcast/103 And if you're enjoying this podcast, please take a quick moment right now and leave me a review on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a long review, but it's truly the best way to support this show and will help others like you find this podcast. And finally, if you're thinking about selling your own homemade food, check out my free mini course where I walk you through the steps you need to take to get a cottage food business off the ground.

[00:59:50] to cottagefoodcourse.com. Thanks for listening, and I'll see you in the next episode.