



Thanks to a home-based business, Reid-Mitchell can provide comfortably for children Rhiannon, 7, and Yordan, 14.

She's the Boss

Setting and sticking to her goals have allowed Donna Reid-Mitchell, 42, to turn a side hustle into a \$3.8 million Avon business and raise her two children

BY AISHA I. JEFFERSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY MISTY KEASLER

ESSENCE: When you first started selling Avon in 2003, you worked as a beautician. This was a side hustle that netted \$100 a month. Within two years, you were selling Avon full-time. Now you run a \$3.8 million business, and you earn more than \$100,000 annually. Tell us about your ascent.

Donna Reid-Mitchell: I had a clear business plan, and I was determined to increase my commission and reach my goals. At first my goal was to earn \$100 monthly. To earn more, I doubled my hours to 20 per week, distributed more brochures and set weekly goals for how many new team members I should add to my business unit. I had to be very disciplined in putting my plan in action, and I taught my team members to do the same. Our goal this year is to exceed \$4 million in sales. In this business it's about trying to make as much as you can.

ESSENCE: What do you love about working as a full-time entrepreneur?

Reid-Mitchell: I've had so many dreams come true. Two and a half years after working in my business full-time, I moved

from a one-bedroom apartment to a four-bedroom home, I bought my first car and I started to travel with my children several times a year.

ESSENCE: As a single mom you're fortunate to have an excellent support system to help take care of your 7-year-old daughter, Rhiannon, and 14-year-old son, Yordan. How does your extended family help?

Reid-Mitchell: My children's grandparents are in Jamaica, so we were lucky to have friends in Texas who took on that role. A trusted friend is a great father figure to my son, and he has best friends—well-rounded married men—who assist Yordan with his studies. And my sister who lives with us is an undergraduate full-time student. She treats the kids like little adults, and they like that. Since I travel every few months, it's nice to know that my children are safe and taken care of by my inner circle.

ESSENCE: You run your business from home. How do the kids know when you're in "work mode" versus "mommy mode"?

Reid-Mitchell: I have a schedule posted in my office. They know that after 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, it's their time. If it's really important, they will slip me a note. And if they are home from school on a holiday, I take off at 3 p.m. When I leave my home office for the day, that's it.

ESSENCE: Are your kids mini moguls?

Reid-Mitchell: They are starting to be. Recently my son wanted to give out cards at Teachers' Appreciation Day. He asked his sister to make the cards, and she replied, "That will be \$3 each." On another occasion, my son came to me and said, "I need \$30," and offered to distribute 100 flyers for me. These experiences are preparing them for the business world.

ESSENCE: What do you like to do when you're not working or being a mom?

Reid-Mitchell: I like to do scrapbooking. You can embellish your pictures with a journal entry or by adding creative lettering, buttons, charms and funky mosaic prints. It's a wonderful way to preserve precious memories.

3 WAYS DONNA STAYS FOCUSED

1. PLAN IN CYCLES. "I break down my yearly plan to 90 days, 60 days, 30 days, weekly, then daily. When I wake up I know that I have to stick to the game plan if I want to win," Reid-Mitchell says.

2. CHART THE PROGRESS. Every week review your goals, check off those you've accomplished and focus on the tasks for the coming week.

For Reid-Mitchell, doing progress reports keeps her accountable.

3. CELEBRATE THE WIN. If you pitch a client successfully or hit a sales target, treat yourself. For Reid-Mitchell, it's usually a spa day. But if she meets her business goals this August, she'll upgrade to a Sony Vaio F Series Notebook PC with a built-in camera for Skype (\$1,200, sonystyle.com).