

SPEAKER

Alicia Hardman

The Grounded Visionary

Serial entrepreneur · Founder of Shale Ridge Estate Winery & Cidery, Shale Ridge Nordic Spa, and Quism · Courage over comfort

THE TALK

Alicia Hardman built a multi-brand business from a two-car garage, with a modest loan, no outside investors, and plenty of people telling her she would fail. In this talk she shares the real story behind the grounded climb: the tactical tools, the hard calls, and the frameworks that carried her from first steps to cross-border expansion across Canada and into the U.S.

She is candid about doing it all while raising young kids and refusing to lose herself along the way. Expect a practical, honest roadmap for building a business, and a life, with intention, and the reminder that courage over comfort is a daily choice, not a one-time leap.

Biography

Alicia Hardman is a serial entrepreneur, business strategist, and the architect behind a multi-brand empire built on turning uncertainty into opportunity. She calls her path the grounded climb, and it started early: selling fruit at her family's apple farm, Juicy Fruit Orchards, before spending seven years in healthcare. Today she leads three Canadian brands: Shale Ridge Estate Winery & Cidery, Shale Ridge Nordic Spa, and Quism, a hair wellness line preparing for launch.

In 2015, Alicia and her husband, Garren, made a leap plenty of people called too risky. They bought 12 acres of an abandoned orchard with a modest loan and zero outside investors, and started completely from a two-car garage. Told she would fail, Alicia bootstrapped Shale Ridge into a thriving destination instead. When the world paused in 2020, she scaled. Twelve-hour days hand-delivering cider straight to customers turned that garage operation into a 10,000-square-foot commercial facility in a single year.

For Alicia, sustainable scaling isn't about working harder. It's about operating smarter. Using the EOS (Traction) model and her own decision-making framework, B.R.A.I.N. (Benefits, Risks, Assessment, Intuition, Nothing), she moved from working in the day-to-day business to leading it from the top. Her guiding question says it best: if your business has an operations manual, why doesn't your life? That systems-first mindset lets her run three growing companies while protecting what matters most, conscious motherhood and her own growth.

Her latest expansion, the Shale Ridge Nordic Spa, blends farm luxury with ecological purpose, a wellness retreat designed to protect both the natural landscape and the guest experience. That same commitment to slow science and clean, botanical quality led her to Quism, a 25-year-old professional hair health formula passed down from her salon-expert father-in-law, now being prepared for a global launch.

Today, Alicia inspires women to build with deep intention, and to remember that sustainable ambition has to be anchored in rest, authenticity, and clear strategy. As she puts it:

> *"Courage over comfort."* — ALICIA HARDMAN

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