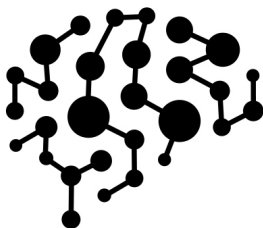


ONE GOLDEN NUGGET



**HOW TO
SURVIVE
AND
THRIVE
VOLUME III**

**JOE FOSTER, FOUNDER OF REEBOK,
RETURNS WITH POWERFUL NEW STORIES OF
RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION, CHANGING THE
WORLD ONE PAGE AT A TIME.**

Joe Foster



DOMINIQUE CAGLE

Founder, Owner, and CEO of
Nika Corporate Housing LLC

When Dominique said, “Being an entrepreneur is not for everyone because every day you’re walking the plank of life with a sink-or-swim mentality,” I knew exactly what she meant. Our businesses may be worlds apart, but our mindset is strikingly similar. Over the decades, she’s faced countless moments where giving up might have seemed easier, but she never did. Like me during my time at Reebok, she kept searching for that elusive white space. It’s that ability to pivot, to adapt, and spot opportunity where others might not, that has kept her not just afloat, but truly thriving.

Dominique describes an idyllic childhood in Oklahoma City, growing up alongside her two sisters and a golden retriever. She loved playing tennis, going fishing, and attending church on Sundays. “I was very happy, going to summer camps, skiing, and spending Christmases with my cousins,” she says. She also speaks fondly of the early mentors who shaped her outlook, her father, who worked in business, and her grandfather, a US Air Corps veteran who survived the attack on Pearl Harbour. “They were always teaching me lessons about life and business,” she recalls.

School didn’t come easily to Dominique. She had to work hard to stay in the top class, and credits her mother’s steady encouragement for keeping her going. “We are built to do hard things,” she would say, a phrase that stayed with Dominique and helped carry her through. That mindset eventually led her to Harvard, a testament to what can be achieved with determination and discipline. Along the way, she developed practical habits to manage the pressure. “I used a planner to write down all my assignments,” she explains. “I’d tackle the hardest tasks first, then move on to the easier ones. It’s a habit I still follow today.”



Although traditional academics weren't her strongest suit, Dominique's strengths showed up elsewhere. A natural with people, she was often involved in her parents' businesses. She worked daily at her father's radio station, filing receipts, assisting with accounting and sales, making tea and coffee, and stepping in wherever she was needed. "I was very much a team player with my family," she says, "and I wasn't afraid of hard work."

After not getting into law school, she took a job as a flight attendant, keen to travel. "I spent Christmas in Paris, cycled around the Netherlands, spent time in South America and Japan, and learned so much about different cultures," she says. But after 9/11, she was laid off and had to act quickly to find a new path.

By that time, Dominique was married to her husband, who was serving in the military. After hearing repeated complaints about the poor quality of temporary housing for service members and their families, she spotted an opportunity. She began renting properties, furnishing them, managing the logistics, and subletting them to others in need of short-term accommodation. The model took off, and what started as a simple solution quickly grew. She went on to formalise the idea by founding Nika Corporate Housing.

As founder and CEO, Dominique has navigated a highly competitive industry with grit and focus. As a woman- and veteran-run business, Nika faced its share of uphill battles. One of the toughest came when the Air Force Base informed tenants that rent would only be reimbursed if they leased from companies on an approved list. Almost overnight, clients began moving out. It took expensive litigation to fight their way onto that list, and, eventually, they were back in business. But it was a defining moment for the small Tampa-based company: a period of sheer survival.



**“There is no courage
without vulnerability.”**



Another challenge came on a more personal front. After the birth of her son, Dominique brought her newborn into the office and was met with disapproval. It was a stark reminder of the cultural hurdles working mothers still face. But rather than back down, she saw it as one more barrier to push through.



Lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic brought a fresh wave of challenges. Dominique had leased multiple flats for international tenants, plans that quickly unravelled. “We had units with signed leases, but people couldn’t leave their home countries,” she explains. Forced to adapt, she pivoted fast, securing a government contract for her meeting, planning, and event services. The profits helped cover the unpaid rents back in Tampa.



From there, she shifted focus to a new demographic: remote workers relocating to Florida, families undergoing home renovations, and even athletes arriving for spring training. What began as a solution for members of the military became something far more versatile. Dominique discovered that the need for temporary housing stretched well beyond what she’d initially imagined.

Dominique also expanded her business to include a travel agency and became IATA certified. “It’s come in handy,” she says, “whether it’s booking a cruise for friends or finding hotel accommodations for my family.”

With several awards now under her belt, she's proud of how far she's come. "I enjoy what I do so much, and when a tenant gives us a positive review, it always makes me smile and feel good. Although we are here to make a profit, it's great that we are helping people out as well." It's that blend of business acumen and human connection that continues to drive her forward.

Dominique's company is built to serve a wide range of budgets, offering VIP, mid-level, and intern housing options — something for everyone. For tenants who choose to share and split costs, she developed a detailed questionnaire that covers everything from hobbies and interests to daily routines, like whether someone is a morning person. It's all designed to help match roommates with care and compatibility.

Dominique focuses on building relationships, nurturing trust, and listening closely to feedback. "I always, always challenge myself," she says. Whether it's choosing the right pasta sauce to stock in the fridge or selecting the laundry detergent her clients prefer, no detail is too small. It's that attentiveness and drive to go the extra mile that sets her service apart.

Dominique also makes a point of experiencing her service firsthand. "As a mother of three, with two step-children, when my family wants to go to Orlando for the weekend, I bring the kids, the dog, and my husband to stay in one of our flats," she explains. It's both family time and field research, an opportunity to check the quality of the towels, the firmness of the pillows, or any small detail that might need adjusting.



**“Change your thoughts, and
you’ll change your world.”**

She's proud to see the business continue to grow, though she's mindful of the circumstances driving that demand. "Since the pandemic, more people are getting sick, and hospitals often don't have enough staff, so they turn to us for corporate housing," she says. "Natural disasters are also increasing, whether it's a fire, flood, or hurricane, people need somewhere safe to stay." Her work, at its heart, is about meeting people in moments of disruption, and giving them a place that feels, even briefly, like home.

Over the past twenty years since Dominique launched her company, technology has evolved rapidly, bringing both new challenges and fresh opportunities. In response, she started a separate venture focused on managing corporate housing data more efficiently. "We're constantly refining our data," she explains. "We have a developer on staff who updates our software as needed. The system allows us to spot trends, identify areas where we may be losing money, and track our profit margins." It's this commitment to staying agile and data-driven that continues to shape the way her business moves forward.

She adds that the platform also supports the sales team by storing client history, contact details, and booking records, all securely in the cloud. "This software helps us stay current with technology. It gives us a clear view of what's profitable and what's not, so we can make informed decisions and adjust our strategy as needed."



With profits exceeding \$6 million in 2024 and a growing network of 1099 housekeepers to coordinate, investing in robust technology is essential. It's what allows Dominique and her team to streamline operations, maintain efficiency, and continue delivering a consistently high standard of service.

Dominique's commitment to philanthropy began during her university years and has remained central to her values ever since. "We like to be involved in the community and give back," she explains. With many of their clients being veterans, her company supports causes such as the Wounded Warrior Project and the Homeless Veterans Foundation. She also donates surplus or gently used linens, towels, toiletries, and other supplies to organisations like the Salvation Army and local women's shelters. Dominique has built giving back into the fabric of her business.

Dominique's efforts extend well beyond financial donations. She's committed to building a sustainable business, using green cleaning products, recycling, and driving an electric car. On a personal level, she gives her time freely. "I take meals to the Ronald McDonald House, spend time with families, and sponsor several children through Children International, encouraging them to study hard and follow their dreams," she says. She also teaches Sunday school at her local church.





**“To change, we must be sick and
tired of being sick and tired.”**



Faith remains a steady anchor in her life. After nearly dying while giving birth to her third child, her perspective shifted. “Looking at my own mortality was a scary process,” she says. “Since that experience, I feel blessed and grateful for my health, for being alive, for taking care of my kids every day, and for running the companies I lead. I now see work, life, and family in a whole new way.”

With a strong track record of growth and experience across leadership, business development, sales strategy, and building long-term partnerships, Dominique now carves out time in her busy schedule to share her journey as a public speaker. For the little girl who once wouldn’t read aloud in class, it’s a powerful shift. Today, she stands in front of hundreds, speaking on topics such as entrepreneurship, leadership, resilience, sales strategy, negotiation mastery, and creative housing solutions.

“I’m driven by a passion for delivering innovative, client-focused solutions that create lasting value for both customers and stakeholders,” she says. Just as she enjoys passing on her experiences to others, she finds equal value in connecting with fellow entrepreneurs and drawing inspiration from their stories, too.

“I hope to leave a legacy of hospitality and caring for people,” she says. For Dominique, that legacy isn’t just about business success, it’s also about cherishing life’s quieter moments. She believes in celebrating both major milestones and the small, meaningful wins, like her son’s seventh-grade graduation.

Not yet fifty, Dominique continues to strive towards the best version of herself. With many passions and youth still on her side, she’s already looking ahead. “I’m excited about the future,” she says, and she hopes to one day diversify into fashion.

She stays active with daily dog walks, workouts, swimming, and tennis. She is also a certified master trainer and sports nutritionist. But wellness, for her, goes beyond the physical. Dominique is a strong advocate for therapy, both for herself and her children, providing them with a “safe place to navigate bullying, school, or anything else.”

Though she’s faced her share of business challenges, she’s quick to say that motherhood has been her most demanding and most rewarding role. With three children of her own, Daxton, Levi, and Mia, and two stepdaughters, Elizabeth and Jessica, her blended family remains her greatest source of motivation. “It’s a pleasure to be their mother and to help teach them about life and its lessons,” she says, just as her own parents once encouraged her to always keep growing.



**“The best project that
you’ll ever work on is you.”**



**“Brave leaders are never
silent about hard things.”**



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