

BUILDING OLIVE & GREY

The Monday Debrief • Week 1

START BEFORE YOU HAVE THE WHOLE PLAN
Tentative launch: October 1, 2026

THE 30-SECOND UPDATE

Greyson and I are building a tiny art business together.

Olive & Grey started with painting for fun, a six-year-old who discovered an ad for an art vending machine, and a homeschool business project that got a little more real than expected. Now we have a name, an Etsy shop shell, 20–30 sellable pieces, supplies, and a tentative October 1 launch date.

Do we know exactly what this business will become? Nope. That's kind of the point.

For the next three Mondays, I'm sharing the actual decisions behind building it: what I prioritize, what I skip, what gets messy, and the business principles underneath it all.

WHERE WE ARE RIGHT NOW

- Etsy shop: Shell created
- Branding: Name + logo created
- Inventory: About 20–30 sellable collaborative pieces
- Initial product: ACEOs, with some larger originals possible
- Prints/products: Exploring, but likely a Version 2.0
- Packaging + shipping: Researched, still messy
- Pricing: Research done, final prices TBD
- New art-supply investment: About \$63, plus supplies we already owned
- Revenue goal: None yet
- Tentative launch: October 1

WHY ARE WE EVEN DOING THIS?

Considering the number of things already on my plate, this is a fair question. 😊

Both Greyson and I love creating. Art actually became an intentional part of homeschool because he used to be afraid to make things if he couldn't make them "perfect." We've spent a

lot of time practicing creating simply because we enjoy it, experimenting, noticing what we like, and letting things be imperfect.

Then Greyson saw an ad for an art vending machine.

Naturally, this became a business plan.

We researched ACEOs, what they sell for, costs, and how an art business might work. Suddenly one project was giving us art, math, entrepreneurship, money management, observation, mindset practice, and time together.

I don't need Olive & Grey to make a ton of money for it to be worthwhile. I want Greyson to experience what it feels like to take an idea, create something, offer it to another person, make a sale, understand the numbers, and build something together.

If it grows? Amazing.

If Grandma and Grandpa are our best customers and I end up with a house full of paintings I made with my son? Also amazing.

WHAT WE'RE ACTUALLY SELLING

Everything is collaborative. Greyson and I work on every piece together.

He might create a watercolor background and I'll come in with ink or pen. We might experiment with acrylics, colors, shapes, or a technique we saw at an art festival. We're deliberately letting the art emerge before forcing ourselves into a rigid product line.

For launch, the clearest offer is:

- Original ACEOs
- Possibly some larger original pieces

Prints, cards, and products featuring scanned artwork are interesting, but they don't need to exist for Version 1.0.

Also, our current inventory problem is that Greyson keeps deciding the newest piece is too good to sell. So there's that. 😂

THE DECISIONS + WHY

1. We started before deciding exactly what the store would sell.

We needed experience more than we needed a perfect product strategy. Making things is showing us which materials we enjoy, which styles we naturally return to, and what we actually want Olive & Grey to be.

Action is creating information that planning couldn't.

2. We're keeping overhead tiny.

We already owned a lot of art supplies. I bought roughly \$63 worth of paper, acrylic pens, paint colors, and other supplies we'll use whether the business succeeds or not.

No giant inventory purchase. No elaborate equipment setup. No expensive branding package.

3. Etsy is enough for now.

No separate website. No separate email list. No giant funnel. Olive & Grey is operating as a DBA under my existing LLC.

The question right now isn't, "How do we build the ultimate art-business ecosystem?"

It's, "Can someone buy our art?"

4. We put a date on the calendar before everything was ready.

We've been happily painting for a while, which is lovely... but "someday we'll sell these" has no urgency.

October 1 gives us a finish line. It turns this from an art project that might become a business into something that has to become buyable.

The date isn't sacred. If life happens, we can move it. But having a target changes what I prioritize.



THE REAL CONSTRAINT

Here's where this got interesting.

If I had only two hours to work on Olive & Grey this week, I would NOT use them to make more art.

We already have 20–30 pieces.

The current bottleneck is getting a finished painting from our table to a place where another human can actually purchase it.

Right now that means figuring out a repeatable workflow for:

finished art → scan/photo → file storage → editing/mockups → Etsy listing → pricing → shipping

I've already learned one lesson the tedious way: scanning a bunch of pieces together and then breaking them apart individually takes approximately seven thousand years on my ancient scanner. 😂

So my biggest priority isn't more inventory. It's creating the SOP once so every future piece can follow the same path.

That's the work that unlocks the next stage of the business.

WHAT WE'RE NOT DOING

Right now, Olive & Grey does NOT need:

- A full website
- A formal business plan
- Perfect branding
- A separate email list
- A huge product catalog
- A complicated social strategy
- Prints figured out before launch
- A massive inventory

Could some of those things become useful later? Sure.

But they are not currently standing between us and a customer being able to buy a painting.

That distinction matters.

THE BUSINESS-STRATEGY LENS

If I put on my Alex Hormozi-ish hat for a minute, there are things I think we're doing well:

- Low financial risk
- Using assets we already have
- Moving quickly instead of overbuilding
- Keeping infrastructure simple
- Getting toward an actual transaction
- Letting real-world feedback inform what comes next

And there are obvious unanswered questions:

Who is the customer?

What will they value most?

What should we charge?

Which pieces will actually sell?

Will people want originals, prints, cards, or something we haven't thought of yet?

Those are important questions.

But I don't think all of them need theoretical answers before we open.

Some of them are questions the market can answer better than I can.



THE COLD COFFEE CLUB LESSON

This is probably the part I want you to steal for your own business:

You don't need to build the whole business. You need to identify the next constraint.

At first, our next step was simply: make art.

So we made art.

Now we have plenty of art, which means making MORE art feels productive but doesn't actually move us much closer to a sale.

The constraint moved.

Now the work is building the boring little bridge between "we made this!" and "you can buy this."

That's something I see happen constantly in business. We keep doing the part we know how to do because it feels productive, while the actual bottleneck sits somewhere else waiting for us.

You don't need steps 1–27 mapped out.

Take step 1. See what it teaches you. Then look around and ask:

What is actually stopping the next thing from happening?

That's probably your next move.

HOW THIS FITS THE WAY I TEACH BUSINESS

Olive & Grey is absolutely not being built in ideal entrepreneurial conditions.

It's being built around homeschool, my other businesses, client work, family life, and whatever pockets of time we actually have.

And that's intentional.

We're following energy. We're keeping the minimum viable version genuinely minimum. We're using what we already have. We're letting one activity serve multiple parts of our life instead of demanding that everything live in its own tidy box.

The business has to fit the life, not the other way around.

And importantly, we know what we're optimizing for.

Olive & Grey doesn't have to become the highest-revenue use of my time to be successful. It gets to create connection, learning, creativity, memories AND potentially money.

That changes the decisions I make about it.

BEFORE NEXT MONDAY

The goal isn't "build Olive & Grey."

It's to make the path from finished painting → purchasable product repeatable.

My focus:

- Decide on the scanning/photo + file-storage workflow
- Create the basic listing SOP
- Work through Etsy listing requirements
- Make initial pricing decisions
- Get clearer on packaging + shipping

- Start turning our existing inventory into actual listings

👁️ WHAT I'M WATCHING

I don't know yet:

- Which styles people will respond to
- What customers are willing to pay
- Whether ACEOs or larger originals will get more interest
- Whether prints/products are worth pursuing
- Who our actual customer turns out to be
- How much of this Greyson will want to keep building once selling becomes real

I'm not treating those unknowns as holes in the business plan.

I'm treating them as things we're about to learn.

🚗 A NOTE FROM THE SIX-YEAR-OLD FOUNDER

Greyson does, in fact, have plans for his future earnings.

Some will be tithed. Some will go toward investments. Some will go back into supplies. He'll learn the difference between revenue, expenses, and profit along the way.

And some will apparently be used to buy cars. 😂

His longer-term expansion strategy is an art vending machine. He has already talked to a local nursery about putting one near their checkout, and they're open to the idea.

So perhaps I should stop saying we don't have a business plan.

We have one.

It just involves significantly more vending machines than mine would have.

NEXT DEBRIEF: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Let's see what happens when Olive & Grey starts moving from "we make art" to "we sell art."