

This OnlyFans Star Was Once Part of a Fanatical MLM Cult. “I Was Forced Into Celibacy.”

Cami Strella is among OnlyFans' biggest stars, earning six figures a month and donating a portion to clinical research on PTSD.

Cami Strella

But nearly five years ago, Strella was \$25,000 in debt and barely surviving under the tutelage of a bizarre MLM (multilevel marketing) scheme that she describes as running like a strict religious cult.

At one point, Strella was required to become celibate, labeled a sex addict, and encouraged to see a trauma counselor to cure her.

Strella opened up about her harrowing experience in an exclusive interview with *Entrepreneur* in hopes of helping others avoid her missteps.

“This wasn’t like being a Mary Kay lady,” she says. “There was a much deeper immersion of experience that many people in multilevel marketing companies have never had. This was deeply personal. It was about restructuring and reshaping you as an individual.”

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How the recruiting worked

Strella was finishing her college undergraduate degree when her brother approached her to make some money on the side, recruiting people to sell products for Amway, which makes health and beauty products.

She agreed, partly because she needed the money but also because she saw it as a way to reconnect with her estranged brother. But what she (and her brother) had no way of knowing was that she was about to give her life away to a manipulative MLM scheme.

MLM, or network marketing, is a sometimes controversial but legal way of selling products or services directly to consumers using independent sales representatives. In this case, Strella would be trained by a third-party consultancy,

in what they dubbed “the process,” to recruit other sales representatives.

“Every day, I would approach five people and do what’s called ‘dropping the message,’ which is basically vetting someone to see if they’re happy with their life or work,” Strella says. “I was trained to seek out the most desperate and vulnerable with the goal of retiring early by recruiting enough people to support myself financially.”

If one of her targets expressed dissatisfaction with their life, she would follow up with them a few days later to set up a coffee date. There, she explains, “I would give them a very well-scripted story about my life that was easy to sympathize with or relate to. Everyone’s been depressed, so if I revealed my past trauma, people would be like, ‘Wow, she’s so vulnerable, I gotta trust her.’”

Eventually, her recruits were encouraged to go to a meeting where they would meet with another impressive salesperson who’d arrive in a fancy car and promise them that they, too, could be rich and self-sufficient.

Going off the deep end

Soon, Strella began to meet with other successful MLM coaches. She was so impressed that she dropped out of school to recruit full-time.

“Being around entrepreneurs with so much money really dazzled me,” she says. “I gave up absolutely everything to pursue this, as I was inspired by all the cars, private jets, and travel my mentors participated in.”

She was encouraged to set up an online store, dropping \$25,000 of her own money to get it started.

Her training landed her in Seattle, where she lived with a deeply religious couple who preached that yoga was demonic and unmarried sex was sinful.

“I was forced into celibacy,” Strella recalls. “I just went with it because I’m like, these people are rich, and they know people who are very rich, so I guess this is the way.”

After eight months, she hooked up with a guy and told her mentors, who accused her of being a sex addict. They asked her to go to a Christian sexual trauma counselor, which Strella calls “slut conversion therapy.”

She was given a required list of books to read and CDs to listen to, which always told the same rags-to-riches stories of other adherents to the MLM’s philosophy.

Escaping the MLM

Strella gradually became aware that she was being brainwashed. “It took me a year to really admit and gain the self-awareness that this was, in fact, a cult,” she says.

She moved to the east coast and re-enrolled in school to earn a degree as a neuroscientist. In 2020, Strella created her

OnlyFans channel to pay her tuition. The channel became so popular she pursued it full-time, using some of the sales techniques she learned in the MLM – only this time for good.

Strella now donates 10% of her monthly earnings to raise awareness and funds for causes around mental health, PTSD, and traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), particularly for military veterans.

“My whole goal of getting into sex work was to support myself while I pursued something to help other people. Now I can help hundreds a day by funding research,” she says.

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<https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/onlyfans-star-opens-up-about-being-part-of-an-mlm-cult/444436>