

CO-AUTHORED BY



BEING A
BADASS
B*TCH
IN BUSINESS AND LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

Being a badass can mean so many things. For me it is having confidence, for others it is being kind, others resilience and for some, how we give. In any case it seems there is a need to own this part of yourself and learn acceptance of all the things that challenge us, give us those white-knuckle moments, and likewise being able to recognise our achievements without ego and without the fear that our own successes take away from the success of others.

I felt compelled to assemble this collection because so many of the people I know are champions of “badassary.” They know who they are, they know their purpose and they know how to channel this into all sorts of tools for others. I wanted to showcase women because I personally understand that having the strength to own the badass that lies within can be fraught with difficulty, not least all the expectations of others. It is the many fearless women I have known in my life who have shaped me, listened to me, supported and guided me, who have enabled me to reveal my inner badass which in turn helps others to do the same.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if projects like these became self-fulfilling prophecies, one woman championing the next and the next until we were all those women strong enough to “fix each other's crowns” without fear, judgement and insecurity.

If you have downloaded this please enjoy sinking into the stories of others, I hope it helps you to awaken your own badass in your own life or business... or both! If you learn something from these pages, then please share with others and continue the cycle.

Annelies James x

RESILIENCE

Sonia Munday – Yellow Book Interiors

“If your heart is broken, make art with the pieces.” – Shane Koyczan

The Oxford Learner’s Dictionary defines Resilience as, “the ability of people or things to feel better quickly after something unpleasant, such as shock, injury, etc.”

I was surprised when I read the word “quickly” as for me resilience is something that has had to be learned and practiced again and again. A “shock [or] injury” can come at any point in our lives and can be anything from the loss of a job, a relationship breakdown, bereavement, ill health or a global pandemic but these things do not necessarily come in isolation. One devastating loss can follow another as a direct or indirect consequence of the triggering event. So just as life knocks you down and you have barely struggled to your feet, something else comes along and causes you to fall again.

It’s a natural human response to want things to return to normal as quickly as possible, to bounce back to how they were before, but depending on the gravity of your ordeal some things may just never be the same again.

Eric Greitens, American Politician and Former Navy Seal, states in his book *Resilience: Hard-Won Wisdom for Living a Better Life*, “Life’s reality is that we cannot bounce back. We cannot bounce back because we cannot go back in time to the people we used to be. The parent who loses a child never bounces back. The nineteen-year-old who sails for war is gone forever, even if he returns. You know that there is no bouncing back. There is only moving through.” “What happens to us becomes a part of us, Resilient people do not bounce back from hard experiences; they find healthy ways to integrate them into their lives.” “In time, people find that great calamity met with great spirit can create great strength”. (pages 22-23).

Depending on the level of trauma and loss we have experienced it can be so easy to let the human condition take over. We will feel doubt, despair, deep disappointment, shame, resentment, despair & loathing, for ourselves and others, and resort to self-destructive behaviours to numb the pain. We may lose all sense of self-respect and neglect our own personal care, the well-being of those around us and our environments. If we’ve suffered one traumatic event after another we may be plagued with PTSD and find that we’re triggered by some small incident which in fact has its memory in something far more traumatic. We can lose our sense of purpose, our joy for life and wonder what the point of it all is. Conversely, we may choose to ignore the vast well of emotions which keep springing up and keep pushing them down in an attempt to pretend that everything is really ok, or an unwillingness to show weakness to those around us. But long term none of these things are going to help you build resilience. Short term they will provide relief, but the pain of leaving your trauma unacknowledged and not properly dealt with can be more painful than the thing which caused the damage in the first place.

But as business owners, and mothers, daughters, and sisters, we have so many people who depend on us for nurture and support, so we have to actively decide to not stay in this place. We have to lean into our emotions and develop strategies and support networks to hold us

up, for by moving through these heart-breaking and painful experiences is how we will develop our resilience. Brene Brown, Research Professor and Social Worker refers to these times as “face down in the arena” moments.

In her book *In Rising Strong*, Dr. Brown goes back to the data she has collected over years of her research and asks: “What happens when we are facedown? What’s going on in this moment? What do the women and men who have successfully staggered to their feet and found courage to try again have in common? What is the process of *Rising Strong*?”

This is where you develop your resilience. When you finally learn to acknowledge your emotions, allow them to rise up, sit with them and take time to notice how you are feeling. Then let them go for in sitting with your emotions you will begin to find the answers and the direction you need to take to move forward. To help re/discover your true purpose, you will heal your body and your trauma and emerge from your suffering with a new motivation and you will develop a higher level of emotional intelligence and empathy for others suffering. So, what practical steps can we take to develop our resilience?

1. Focus on your well-being, first and foremost. Your ability to cope with anything will stem from how well you look after yourself. Eat healthy nutritious food, stay hydrated and boost your system with additional vitamins and supplements to support your mind and body through this time. Make sure you get enough sleep; a regular sleep pattern and daytime naps are essential for focus and a good mood. Move your body by getting out of the house every day even if it’s just for a walk and limit your use of stimulants such as sugar and alcohol as these can have a detrimental effect on your energy and nervous system. Maintain good personal hygiene, take time for a pamper session, wash your hair, and put your makeup on. It’s surprising how much better it will make you feel.
2. Talk to your family, friends and colleagues or members of your networking groups. Be honest about your experiences and allow them to support listen to you. You don’t have to do it all on your own and if you reach out, you’ll find people would be honoured to help and support you at this time.
3. Take each day as it comes. On your path to building resilience and recovery from trauma some days will be harder than others, but tomorrow is another day to try again.
4. Say “No” to things, people and events which don’t bring you joy. The last thing you need at a time of difficulty is to carry the expectation of others to do this or do that. Saying “No” to things is a powerful way of bringing back some control into your life and in the words of Dr Seuss, “Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.” This time in your life will certainly reveal those people who you do and no longer need in your life.
5. Develop a new routine. As the quote by Eric Greitens said “...we cannot go back to the people we used to be...” so you have to develop a new way of being and doing things. And that’s a good thing. By creating a new routine for your life, you will bring in new

ways of doing things, new recipes to try with your family, find new places to go. Take that bold leap of stepping away from what was familiar and move forward into the new with optimism and excitement for the variety of experiences that will come your way, if you will allow them. And don't forget to clean your house and make your bed. It's amazing how much of an impact these things can have on your mood and sense of control.

6. Make peace with your past. It's so important to take time to heal yourself so you can move forward to a new and brighter future. It requires work though, and may involve many forms of healing from reading personal development books, to meditation to seeking professional counselling or CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). All these practices will help to make sense of the "why did this happen to me", to help you see that you are not alone in your suffering and provide you with coping techniques and strategies to enable you move forward in a focused and positive way.
7. Share your story. Your journey to recovering and rebuilding your life may very well be the inspiration someone else needs. Share the resources and practices which were helpful for you and in doing so you can support and mentor someone else who values the wisdom and insights you have gained on your journey.
8. Find joy again. Take time to think about the hobbies and interests you always had but never had the time for. Rediscover them whether it be art, music, theatre, discovering new places or playing sport. For these are the stuff of life and through them you'll rediscover your passions.
9. Make plans for the future. Whether this be a day out with a friend for shopping and a spot of lunch, a family holiday or a new goal you wish to achieve in your business, for by making plans you will have things to look forward to and new happy memories to make.
10. And finally, be thankful for your experience. Though you might not have been thankful for the trail you went through at the time, it is possible to be grateful for the lessons which you have learned. How have you grown, what have you discovered about yourself, and others, as a result of your experiences and what opportunities have opened up to you as a result. Be thankful, for in being so, you will have learned how to be resilient.

As Helen Keller said, "although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it. My optimism, then, does not rest on the absence of evil, but on a glad belief in the preponderance of good and a willing effort to always cooperate with the good, that it may prevail."

ABOUT SONIA

Sonia Munday is a single mum of two lovely kids, a girl and a boy. A talented interior designer, she runs her own business, creating beautiful spaces for her clients. As a Christian, her faith and trust in God saw her through the difficult years of an abusive marriage and its subsequent break up. She survived - and now she's thriving, resilient and stronger than ever!

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STRINDNESS

Adele Deasy – Plan A Dynamic Consulting

Strong + Kindness = Strindness

Throughout my career I have always hung my practice, decisions, and leadership on kindness. Surprisingly this is not as popular as one may think, in fact it can make some feel decidedly uncomfortable! As difficult as it was, I always decided that a problem with being around kindness was more to do with my audience than with me. If my choice to put kindness first was met with scepticism or seen as some kind of 'get out', I would often use the mantra 'do not mistake kindness for weakness' People might have felt more comfortable with being chastised as a consequence of poor choices, however, I never felt the need to compromise my values. Indeed, there is a great strength in meeting poor choices with kindness; offering the opportunity to discuss, reflect, apologise or reconsider a decision. Kindness here is not synonymous with instant forgiveness or total absolution, but an acknowledgement that most poor choices are not the result of deliberate malice or someone coming to work intending to do a bad job.

From a career in education I live by the exciting prospect that constructivism is alive and well. Knowledge and learning are built on past experiences and connections and not poured into empty vessels. In this spirit, I recently learned from my daughter who is studying for a degree in Psychology that our brains have difficulty with processing the concept of the word 'not'. Using this word can build connections between the very concepts that one is trying to disentangle. So, my mantra has changed from not mistaking kindness for weakness into strength is kindness. Strindness.

#whatdoyoustandfor

Watching others trying to use kindness as a leadership strategy has been like watching people trying to push water up a hill with a fork. Whilst the intention to be kind exists in theory, when fatigue, irritability, ego or frustration are introduced, people often put kindness to one side, in order to demonstrate principles such as 'accountability', 'management' or 'capability', as if these concepts cannot coexist with a kind approach. When I set up my own company and read all the advice on straplines and vision statements, I knew that strength and kindness would be my unwavering values. #strindness. Publicity, social platforms, marketing etc. are transparently weak if your authentic value is fake.

#goldenthread

Here is the tricky bit ... as a woman, kindness has maternal connotations. As a mother of three amazing daughters I find nothing offensive about my maternal kindness. As a career driven businesswoman, prepared to take risks, learn, fail, and show strength to be kind, being maternal has nothing to do with it. I showed strength and kindness long before my family were part of my life. I build my career on having the strength to do the right thing. Sometimes those decisions are difficult, but when things get tough, kindness is the default setting that forms the golden thread through strength and success.

#learningjournal

There are so many positive influences that can support and shape you, don't miss them while you try to go it alone. The concept of a grateful book, writing five things each evening that you have been grateful for in the day, was more influential over my authentic self than I realised. The first few months of writing in the journal were sporadic and the things that I was grateful for were huge concepts, family, health etc. As time went on, I noticed things during the day that meant something to me and I knew they would feature in my writing that evening. Writing is fine but reading is fascinating. Reading back over the entries over time helped me to identify what I value, what I care about, who I find inspiring and what matters most. This showed me my authentic self, better than any online assessment ever has. In addition to a grateful book I became partial to a learning journal, a comfortable notebook where I write thoughts, ideas, quotes, research or indeed anything else that takes my fancy. Reading it back, which I do frequently, shows me my strategic vision, my new directions, and the risks I am going to take. It also shows me the ideas that went cold and the thoughts that didn't fit; both valuable to know when developing a business. When I ask clients that I work with if they keep any form of learning journal, the answer is usually no and for the ones that do, the answer to whether they ever read it back is no. An easy starting point for anyone's development of authentic self is a well-read learning journal.

#bemoreyou

Here is the strength part of kindness. In professional development seminars that I have hosted, I entitle this area 'Beware the Ankle Grabbers'. I am aware of my strength and my weakness and I am open minded enough to realise that these concepts are fluid. In my career I have been asked by both men and women, to have fewer good ideas, be less creative, be less thoughtful and have less vision. Shocking when it is written down, but I know my experiences are not unique. I have a plethora of strong women in my world who will all be able to empathise with the feeling you get when you are told to dilute yourself to make others feel better. My advice is don't! In fact, whenever you are asked to dilute, be more you. Does this strength fit with kindness too? For sure. Looking out for others who will step aside, step back, be quiet when instructed is one of the kindest things you can do. This is how to change worlds: by being more you and allowing others to have the strength to do the same. You do not have to dilute yourself for anyone to make them feel better.

#ethicalleadership

This isn't an add on, it is the main purpose. Making strong decisions based on kindness is, for me, what ethical leadership looks like. It is not ethical to do the right thing through fear of being caught doing the wrong thing. I do not believe I have worked with a leader who claims to be either unethical or unkind, however I have worked with unethical and unkind leaders. So where is the gap? It is not a misunderstanding of terms; it is a false projection of what individuals think they should be and what their behaviours show they are. Asking an employee 'are you well?' first thing in the morning was a learnt trick to pose a closed question to shorten an interaction whilst appearing to be caring. This is not ethical behaviour. One of my wisest leaders told me to always consider the unintended outcomes of decisions you make. This advice has always remained with me and is the core of my ethical leadership. Leadership comes with responsibility and moral choice. Some leaders choose to use it as an opportunity for power, often at the expense of others, whilst others use leadership compassionately. Whilst building a business, I care about my reputation and I want my

recommendations to reflect the time and compassion that I put into my work. The carefully phrased difficult conversations that enable skills to be developed and actions to be reflected without morale being crushed. Strength in kindness. Reputations are not built on the future; they are built on every interaction you have right now.

#haveyoutothetime

Busy is an emotive word to me that suggests you are occupying your time with incredibly important things compared to the rest of us. Justifying your daily actions as 'busy' is a shutdown to others. As a leader and now as a company director I have time for people. These people may be clients, past or present, colleagues of clients, the person saving me a parking space for my appointment, or the person I walk out of a building with at the end of a working day. Having the strength to invest time willingly into people is the unique selling point that separates one business from another. Previous employees have commented that they would not be able to do my job because of the time I invest in relationships. For me it is the best use of my time. It takes time to find people's motivational factors and it takes even more time for people to trust you with that information. I do not need to shroud myself in a high powered masquerade to encourage the best quality work from people, I need to give them time: compassionately, kindly, empathetically, from one human to another. Have you got the time for that? How have you not got the time? Too busy?

#badass

Is it all sounding too fluffy? I am stronger now than I have ever been. I have the confidence to take risks, to raise people up, to support other leaders making their way in their own business and to find support from others when I am faced with unkindness. I have learnt so much from people who have opposing values to mine. My learning journal is packed with critical moments that I have witnessed and will never repeat as a leader. I am quick to identify fake and distance myself from it. I have the strength to move away from the hand in the face that says 'I don't do kindness'. I believe in my concentrated values and will not dilute my authenticity for anyone. I will not be side-lined because of the insecurities of others. I will feed from the energy of other likeminded leaders. I will not look in the eyes of dead wood but will instead search out the motivators that build me up and challenge my development. I will engage in challenging conversations to reach a higher level of reflection and learning. I will continue to gain knowledge and develop myself. I will take risks. I will be strong. I will be kind. I am a badass businesswoman!

ABOUT ADELE

My world of work has, for the most part, been immersed in education; science teacher through to secondary headteacher. Now I find myself as the director of my own business, Plan A Dynamic Consulting. I use my experience and love of learning to develop others with motivational consultancy. Starting a business has taught me how to take risks and I love the creativity of channelling my work into the heart of what matters.

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BALANCE

Claire Marsh – The Box Portsmouth

Is work-life balance a wild-goose chase for an entrepreneur?

Like many other self-employed people, I have been in constant pursuit of a life that has the right work-life balance.

After an 11-year stint working in the finance sector, I had become fed up of being asked to work long hours and deliver results to stressful deadlines. So, in 2012, I quit my well-paid career as a chartered accountant to become a self-employed, and not so well-paid, personal trainer.

My life becomes my work.

The saving grace at that time was dance. A friend and I would regularly attend street dance classes in Portsmouth, and although it was only a hobby, it delivered the 'life' part of the balance that I needed. Back then, there weren't many dance schools in the area, and those that did exist didn't perform regularly and rarely entered competitions. We wanted our hobby to become more, so we decided to set up our own school, and in 2007 Streetforce DC was launched. From then on, we both managed the business and taught for the school in the evenings after work and on weekends.

The dance school quickly took off. We had more and more people coming to classes and getting involved and the school grew to over to fifty participants in no time at all. With this rapid growth came increased organisational responsibilities, and I found myself starting to struggle to fit everything in.

There were a few key moments that helped me to take the leap of faith out of the security of traditional 9-5 (or in my case 7am-7pm) employment. One defining moment came when I was asked to stay on later at work (yet again) to undertake an ad hoc project. I told them that I was unable to because I had to leave to teach dance to thirty children. This didn't go down too well in the office and I was beginning to feel guilty for not prioritising my work. I also often felt resentment from other members of staff, which didn't make for a great working environment.

I've found my passion & purpose

Despite the added time pressure, after a few years of running the dance school alongside my regular job I was feeling a huge sense of fulfilment. By now, my 'hobby' had become work. But it was different because it was helping to improve essential life skills in children and adults, particularly self-confidence. It was so tangible and felt so much more real than any difference I was making number crunching behind a desk in the office. It energised me completely and I felt excited to get up in the morning. Meanwhile, my accounting job had started to fill me with dread and generally left me feeling very depleted.

I decided that I wanted more. I wanted to help others to achieve more and to celebrate what they could personally accomplish through fitness activities, and I enrolled on a personal

trainer course. As soon as I completed the course, I applied for a self-employed personal trainer position at a national gym chain. I got the job and then quit as an accountant. I'm free! Freedom = Work-life balance, right?

Err...it depends how you look at it.

It's true that many people chose to become self-employed to improve their work-life balance. But Ironically, they typically work more hours every week than they previously did, especially in the beginning. The difference is that work is now on your own terms and you determine how much or how little you do. You now have the freedom of choice.

So here I am, completely motivated and raring to go as a personal trainer. Ready to kill it in the fitness industry, train as much as I like when I like, and now I even have the time to become a professional dancer and apply for dance jobs right? Cool, let's go!

Again, no...

I remember during the first few weeks of becoming self-employed I just felt incredibly tired. I seemed to have a lot of afternoon naps and spent most of the days fussing about and not really getting much done at all. At the time I thought I was living the life of luxury and embracing the freedom, but now I realise this was my nervous system dealing with the overwhelm of my new situation.

Fortunately, the financial survival instinct eventually managed to kick in and I got my arse into gear. The routine of having to teach fitness classes in the gym and at my dance school on a regular schedule also helped with this.

Wearing every hat in the whole damn shop

After a few months working as a personal trainer I met my future husband and soul mate. He had also recently quit a higher paid job as a computer technician to pursue a new lifestyle as a personal trainer. We dated for not even a handful of months before deciding to move in together. He would talk about his dream of one day owning his own CrossFit gym and I would speak about my dance and studio ambitions. At the time, CrossFit was just becoming popular and there wasn't a CrossFit gym anywhere in the local area. I was paying crazy prices for studio hire every month running the dance school, and we both knew that if we didn't do something soon then someone else would beat us to it and the opportunity would be lost.

So, after only six months of dating, we signed a five-year lease and got the keys to our new fitness facility. This is where the fun really began, and we both said goodbye to balance for the next few years.

It took three long months of incredibly hard work to get the facility and business ready for opening. We learnt a hell of a lot and had to become jacks of all trades. We were builders, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painter & decorators, salespeople, bookkeepers, accountants, and administrators, as well as being fitness professionals and trying to keep the dance school and our personal training businesses ticking over.

As responsibilities grow in business and in life it becomes harder and harder to strike a manageable work-life balance. One week or month can be totally different to the next depending on what project or events you have coming up. In quieter times, you can spend hours upon hours learning more about running your business, which can be a full-time job in itself.

So, how and when do you stop so that you can achieve the elusive work-life balance?

What are you willing to sacrifice?

My husband and I were very happy working every hour of every day for those three months, and once we opened the doors, we did the same for the next few years to really establish the gymnasium. The real fact of the matter was that financially we had to. Fortunately, it meant that we spent the majority of our time together, our family were involved, and our clients became members and are now lifelong friends. For us, the traditional line between work and life became very blurry.

Somewhere along the way, probably three years down the line, I found I had real trouble switching off. My quest for progression and business improvement, with the purpose of helping others, had become an obsession. I guess I was a workaholic. The ever-present need to make ends meet was coupled with constantly reinvesting to improve the facility.

At family gatherings I would have a nagging feeling of guilt that I should be working to progress the business forward. I couldn't shake it off. There was a definite need to revisit my life's balance. The problem was that I didn't want to: I enjoy what I do and want to be successful at it.

And yet I knew that if I continued this way there would be a cost. I found it hard to chill out, which would eventually be detrimental to my health. It was already affecting my ability to attend family and other social gatherings. I couldn't fully enjoy the 'normal' down-time and social events, which was starting to have an impact on my relationships, including with my husband. I began to ask myself if this was what I wanted? Was this what I had dreamt of when going self-employed? No, I had wanted the perfect balance and freedom.

In my role as a personal trainer and CrossFit coach I teach others how to be generally physically prepared: how to find the right balance of fitness for your body to be ready for any eventuality and therefore to move with freedom. We train our members across the ten domains of fitness so that they excel in all areas. These domains are endurance, stamina, strength, flexibility, power, speed, coordination, agility, balance, and accuracy.

In life more generally, living a balanced life means developing strength in multiple domains including health, nutrition, self-care, family, friends, money, work, relationships, spirituality, and career.

Focusing too much time and energy in one domain could be detrimental to other areas. So, to create a balance time must be spent appropriately on each. This doesn't mean dividing your time across them equally, but enough so that all areas are being adequately served. The trouble is knowing what determines an appropriate amount. For work and money, it is quite

easy to see tangible results, which is possibly the reason why it is so easy to spend more effort here.

There are many highly successful entrepreneurs who excel in their careers, but their health suffers as a result. They build their fortunes ready for retirement but when the time comes, they are often in too ill health to make proper use of their freedom. Or they don't have anyone to share that time with.

There is no right or wrong answer here. What is right for one person may not be right for another. It depends entirely on what you are willing to sacrifice and whether you know the purpose of spending so much time in certain areas. An Olympic athlete, for example, would knowingly spend the majority of their time on health, training, nutrition and self-care in order to progress their athleticism for targeted competitions. It is highly likely that they would miss out on family events and social occasions with friends but would be happy to make this sacrifice to achieve their goals.

Understanding fulfilment

I no longer look at things in terms of whether I am working or living. Instead, I now look at whether I feel like I am living a fulfilled life. I ask myself, if I look back at my life in my elder years, will I be happy with how I have chosen to spend my time on various activities?

Having my daughter was a great turning point for me in terms of redefining the balance of my life's activities. It certainly slowed me down on the workaholic front and gave me the much-needed time to stop and re-evaluate what I was doing instead of just mindlessly pushing for more, day in, day out. It also helped me greatly in my ability to start delegating more, and I have tried many different strategies to keep all the balls in the air without letting any of them drop.

Re-defining the parameters

One thing I noticed I had been doing for years is that whenever I was writing a daily to-do list (and I write a great number of these) the items on the list were always work items. I never put any other items on there. And the lists for the day were always far too long, which meant that I never got to the end of them.

The to-do list was draining me and making me feel quite stressed on a day to day basis. It seems that my life revolved around this and clearly, given it was all work related, my life revolved around just work.

I challenged myself to change this quite ingrained habit. Which was difficult but very worthwhile. Instead of a list of things to do that day, I would brain dump items but select just one main activity that I was hoping to complete. Then, on a monthly basis, I would set myself goals for three areas: business, family, and personal. Each area would have three monthly goals.

I often joke to people and say that whatever gets written down gets done. But I do believe this, and I have read bucket loads of articles stating that you need to write down your goals

to set them in your mind and have your sub conscious work towards them. This was certainly true when we built the gym. We wrote down what we wanted to get done and overtime (not necessarily the timescales we initially imagined) it got done.

Understand what you are energised by

This is not necessarily understanding your strengths and weaknesses as you may be strong in one area of expertise, but it might bore you to tears. For example, I am strong at financial tasks like bookkeeping, but I have come to realise that doing this work does not make me jump for joy in the mornings. It's understanding what tasks really spark your fire, what motivates you and makes you feel fulfilled. The aim is to do more of these tasks and less of the ones that tend to deplete you.

I've come to realise that if my week is made up of the following tasks, I feel a huge sense of fulfilment and accomplishment. I've pulled them into an easy to remember phrase: LET'S GO!

LEARN

Progress is key and is engrained into each and every one of us from birth. The sense of moving forward physically and mentally is part of our make-up and therefore needs to continue through adulthood. If I have learnt a new skill or have educated myself further on a certain topic, I feel good. This can be linked to work or can be completely separate. The main aim is new knowledge.

EXERCISE REGULARLY

As a fitness professional this naturally has to be included within my week. I typically aim for intense exercise three or four times a week. I feel a huge difference, both mentally and physically, if I do this. This release of endorphins is an absolute must for me to drive my week forward and not let lethargy kick in.

THINK

I love taking the time to dream big. It fills me with a strong feeling of hopefulness and excitement. I could spend all day everyday creating plans, writing goals and working out roadmaps to achieve certain outcomes. The great thing is that this can be done absolutely anywhere with just a pen and a piece of paper. The more inspiring the place the better. I make sure I give myself pure thinking time once a week to ensure that I create realistic plans and schedules to move forward in each of my monthly goals. I have realised that to schedule the personal and family time in as particularly important.

SELF-SERVE

This is by far the task I find the hardest to fit into my schedule, but I have made it easier by connecting the act of looking after myself to my business and family goals. As a fitness professional I want to look and feel good, both to stay on brand and to inspire others. As a mother and wife, I need to look after my mental wellbeing and manage stress so I do not transfer any anxieties onto my family. I have also come to recognise that downtime actually produces my best ideas for future growth.

The safety announcements onboard an airplane instruct you to put on your own oxygen mask first. You can't help anyone else if you have run out of oxygen. The same principle is true for self-care. Take care of yourself ahead of others and then you will have the energy and ability to care for others more effectively.

GIVE

Whether it is sharing new or old knowledge, giving expert guidance, contributing my time in support of others, an act of kindness, giving gifts for a special occasion or making monetary donations, I've come to realise that I get a huge amount of fulfilment from serving others. The best kind of giving is certainly the kind that requires nothing in return. It is so true that "we rise by lifting others."

ORGANISE

Now, I'm not the tidiest or most organised person in the world, but I do feel much more in control of life when my living and working spaces are tidy and organised. Minimal clutter and regular cleaning do wonders for my sense of togetherness. Having an 'organise' project in my weekly tasks is therefore a must. This could be anything from automating and delegating work tasks to decluttering my wardrobe. Something tangible that once done makes life more streamlined and efficient.

*

For self-employed entrepreneurs, I recommend ceasing the impossible pursuit of a perfect work-life balance and instead identifying and actioning the activities that contribute to your life fulfilment. Aim to excel and to find your unique balance across the many domains of life, including health, nutrition, self-care, family, friends, money, work, relationships, spirituality, and career. Understand the purpose behind why and how you prioritise each of these and ensure you are happy to accept the long-term sacrifices that might be made. Analyse which tasks truly energise you and find ways to do more of these on a regular basis. Set goals and write task lists for all areas, not just work, to ensure that they get the focus they deserve. Life is short, so how we spend our time should be carefully considered and being a self-employed entrepreneur can allow you to truly embrace the freedom of your choices.

Set yourself free! Let's go!

ABOUT CLAIRE

*Claire Marsh is a fitness athlete and coach who owns and manages a specialist CrossFit gymnasium in Portsmouth, **The Box Portsmouth**.*

With three decades of experience in various competitive sports Claire trains others to unlock personal potential, build confidence and improve their self-esteem through performance-based fitness.

From developing a group of children to become world champion street dancers to coaching a 70-year-old to undertake her first handstand Claire has worked with hundreds of people, of all ages and abilities, to push past physical and mental barriers to truly excel past limiting beliefs.

Claire is particularly passionate about coaching kids and teenagers to install a positive, can do attitude towards fitness so that they can perform at their absolute best and transfer essential skills learnt to tackle challenges in other aspects of life.

CONNECT WITH CLAIRE

WEBSITE

THEBOX

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FACEBOOK

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TWITTER

YOUTUBE

KINDIVITY

Being Kind & The Importance of Connectivity.

Aryana Neo - BBC Radio Solent, Unity 101

Working in such demanding and fast-paced industries, where your surroundings are forever changing and your work is always adapting, being kind may not always seem of high importance. But I have to tell you from my experience, being kind, is almost the only way to survive.

Being kind is defined as;

Generous, helpful, and thinking about other people's feelings:

- She's a very kind and thoughtful person.
- It's very kind of you to help us.
- (Formal) Would you be kind enough to/so kind as to close the door? (please would you do this)¹

Now, I do find a lot of people in the business world very kind, generous and helpful, but this to me should be a given, and a humanitarian way of thinking and delivering yourself to other people.

Being kind, I think, needs to begin with yourself, and from within. In a busy world where females are at the forefront of headlines, for doing well, for surpassing stereotypes, for breaking the traditional mould, for being 'too' independent, or 'too' driven, and of course, for being underpaid in some sectors. Being kind needs to come from within, and in my opinion, this shines throughout your work and personality. As we hear so often, 'people buy into people'. And in a lot of aspects I think this is very true, because you're more likely to do business with someone you 'like' or believe is kind or has your best interests at heart. More so, than an untrustworthy, money-grabbing charmer.

The importance of being kind to yourself first, and letting yourself be openminded to new things, and making mistakes along the way, are all part of the process to becoming the successful version of yourself, albeit in business or your personal life.

Now being kind may seem like a very small, simple, and almost too diluted type of an adjective to describe a BAD BUSINESS B*TCH. But on my career journey, being kind to yourself allows you to come to terms with your path (which may have taken lots of twists and turns and not be what you expected) and it lets you see others in a gentler way.

In an honest admittance, when I was younger and naïve, I will say that meeting people and them not being my certain 'type' of person that I would usually connect with, I would almost instinctively put up an invisible wall, and an emotional barrier – passing judgement basically. And I have learned from doing that, that those people were all carrying their own weight on their shoulders. They all had a journey, and life experience, some of which I could really relate

¹ Cambridge Dictionary. Meaning of kind in English. Cambridge University Press 2020.
<https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/dictionary.cambridge.org/amp/english/kind>

to. Those people were a joy to meet because they taught me something about myself, and I quickly adapted to changing initial perceptions and connecting with everyone that I met on a person by person basis. And definitely not judging on first impressions! Especially when you learn about other people's first impressions of you, then you really realise how we all do it, and we all really shouldn't as we are mostly wrong!

But this leads me on to talk about the second part of my 'wordge' – Connectivity.

Connectivity;

The ability of a computer, program, device, or system to connect with one or more others.²

Now, I am fully aware that I am comparing hardware to human beings, but this word connectivity, has really embedded itself in the business community, and how people describe to have a good presence and good connections in the business community. Connecting to other people and building relationships has been a pivotal and vital role in most of my jobs. Building relationships are key to understanding the people/clients/audience that you are speaking to. For me, in business and on the radio, being connected to people is so important to deliver any message you are trying to deliver or any message and information you are trying to gather.

But for me, 'connectivity' not only is networking and getting yourself out there. It also transfers into being open-minded, having a mindset that allows you to connect with others on all levels. You have to have an open mind to be able to talk to a complex variety of people. You have to be able to let yourself feel uncomfortable. And by uncomfortable, I mean, being out of your comfort zone, because the most magical and life lifting things happen to you when you are, out of your comfort zone. This may translate to some people as trying something completely new, like training for a marathon, or trying something very new and unexpected of what you would normally stick to. But for me, this also translates into allowing yourself to completely relax into a world of new ideas. Being out of your comfort zone by learning new subjects, skills or by speaking to that one person at your networking group that you've been avoiding for weeks. (all because you had previously judged them or thought their 'not your cup of tea')

Being out of your comfort zone and being uncomfortable, is where you will find something new, whether that's a new skill, a new person, or a new lesson to take away. It's always about learning about yourself, and this comes with being kind, and connecting with other people and other networks.

My final thoughts for you to take away are, to be kind to yourself, let yourself be vulnerable to new challenges and new things. Open your mind to new skills, and new people, and feel uncomfortable, even for a moment. Because the most amazing things and revelations can come from being out of your comfort zone. And it might just be that little push or idea that you needed to think of and come to you! Talk to everyone, even that one person you really don't want to 'get stuck' with at the networking breakfast.

² Cambridge Dictionary. Meaning of connectivity in English. Cambridge University Press 2020. <https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/dictionary.cambridge.org/amp/english/connectivity>

Being a BADASS B*tch in Business and Life

Be honest, and true to yourself, because your originality is what makes you unique.

ABOUT ARYANA

Aryana Neo is a producer and presenter for BBC Radio Solent, and community radio station Unity 101 in Southampton.

Aryana is passionate about communicating and sharing stories from a variety of communities and backgrounds, with the aim to give others a voice to be heard.

With a corporate background within banking, helping businesses grow, and a current business engagement manager, Aryana has great experience in relationships management and business strategy skills, which she shares in this book. Aryana has a background in law and holds a bachelor's degree in Criminology.

And fun fact about Aryana is she is an experienced pageant queen, winning UK titles which have taken her around the world. Being able to present and speak on stage, as well as walk the catwalks for competitions.

Aryana adds her honest thoughts and experience, as well as a little bit of sass and energy into her chapter!

CONNECT WITH ARYANA

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MIXOLOGIST

[mik-**sol**-uh-jist]

Lauren De Vries – LDV Hub and LDV Connects

The ability to creatively challenge the norms, unafraid to experiment, mix things up and bring all parts together in order to get their desired outcome.

WHAT IF Lady Gaga had 'fitted in' when she first started?

WHAT IF JK Rowling had given up after being rejected?

WHAT IF Oprah had settled to become a maid like the rest of her family?

You just wouldn't have known them!

I would like to invite you into a world where fitting in can only be limiting us, where giving up is simply not an option and one where others' expectations of us may be way too small compared to what is possible!

Time to bring out the mixologist in you...

4 ideas to mix things up and make your own, a new perspective.

Let's look at things a little differently.

EXPLORE

[ik-splawr,-splohr]

to look into closely; scrutinize; examine: *Let us explore the possibilities for improvement.*

A journey of self-awareness.

There is no right or wrong there is only you and how you want your life to be, as long as you are happy and not causing pain to others, right. Do YOU... Something much easier said than done and one that certainly gets thrown around quite a lot, that it has almost lost its value. Understanding ourselves is something I believe has no destination, it's an ever-evolving journey, an emotional rollercoaster that has a heap of rewards along the way if you can keep pushing through some of those personal boundaries. To dig deeper and beyond the initial responses you tell yourself.

What are some of the things you avoid doing?

What is causing you to avoid them?

How could you get one step closer to overcoming those and achieving?

MIX IT UP: Challenge yourself further with your answers. After your first answer ask why, then ask why again and repeat 3 – 5 times.

I always thought that money and being at the top of the corporate ladder was it! The thing that meant I was successful and happy... but it wasn't. Yes the money gives you an element of freedom but you soon live up to what you're earning and are you using it mainly to impress others, who let's face it are probably more put off by it! It can be extremely easy to keep

Being a BADASS B*tch in Business and Life

wanting more, therefore never really content with the current. Having financial security is something that is important to me, and one that I recognise within the way I live but it's not the top of my agenda.

So, what truly puts the fire in your belly, that feeling where time is non-existent, you are fully present in the moment and feel absolutely unstoppable – you are completely alive! Because whatever that is for you, whatever that may look like, that's what you should be striving for and then I would challenge you to go even bigger, reach for what you think is IMpossible.

What does this do for you, what creates this feeling of energy for you?

Are you doing any of these things now?

How can you start or do more of this?

How can you share that gift with others?

MIX IT UP: You may not even realise straight away what these are because they will feel so natural, you can always work backwards to start with by ruling out all the things that definitely DON'T give you that feeling.

Know what you want and own it, don't be ashamed or make it sound any less because the moment you compromise all of those things, is the moment it could start to build resentment within you and one you may regret in the future. Some people may think you are crazy or in one of your little fantasy worlds but, some may think THEY'RE the crazy ones for continuing to live life any other way.

Someone's opinion will only come from their experiences, beliefs and values... for example: If your ambition was to earn £100,000 a year and own a house, you then told someone who was on an average wage, renting their property (which by the way there is nothing wrong with!) they would give you a very different perspective to the likes of Richard Branson and Oprah Winfrey.

Be mindful of the feedback, don't be against it but be conscious of where that feedback has come from, the basis that it has been built on and use that to help you make the next right move.

So, what DO you want?

What makes up your ideal life?

What will help to get you there?

How do you get those things?

MIX IT UP: It's easy to start with some of the more materialistic elements, because they are more tangible. What would you want if cars, houses, tv's, bags and shoes didn't exist?

Experiment

[*verb* ek-sper-uh-ment]

to try or test, especially in order to discover or prove something: *to experiment with a new procedure.*

Try something new, something more you.

Just because waking up at 5am, going to the gym, having a cold shower, meditating and journaling are part of someone else's perfect morning routine, doesn't mean it will work for you and therefore doesn't mean you are going to be successful or fully fulfilled in life!

You see, taking on board other people's principles, routines and rituals is great as a starting point, a place to get you moving in the right direction, just don't forget that there is way more context to the scenario and this may be one piece of the overall puzzle that have helped this person achieve what they have.

Through the experimentation of the options available to you, not only will you increase your level of self-awareness by understanding the things that work for you and the things that don't, but it may also become the spring board for you to know what to experiment with next.

What in your day to day makes you feel great?

What parts of your day are ok?

What parts of your day suck?

How can you do more of the great types of things, improve the ok's and replace or ditch the sucks?

MIX IT UP: When someone next says they are doing something and your immediate thought is, oh that's definitely not me, yet you have never tried it... go and give it a go, you never know!

Create

[kree-eyt]

to evolve from one's own thought or imagination, as a work of art or an invention.

Bring out your inner child.

When all you needed was a cardboard box to create the most imaginative of things and the clothes you chose to wear that day made you feel great (even though looking back it makes you wonder what the hell you were thinking!) So why is it that our creativity can get lost and we care more about how we look and behave in front of others?

Let's say you are starting or growing your business, you are working on a project or have something you are working towards in your personal life. The majority of us would start with a blueprint of whatever it is we are doing, we are essentially using another child's cardboard box and modifying it to add a few personal touches. You with me?

So why don't we start with a plain, untouched cardboard box? One we can make our own, one that provides everything we want and is unique to us? Could it be that by using the premade box we don't have to put as much work in, doesn't require us to think to much and actually with a few little bits changed here and there, it will do.

As appealing as the easy option sounds, if you are starting or growing your business would it not be worth the input at the beginning and way more satisfying to be able to deliver

something which is nothing like anyone else out there? A concept built from the ground up, avoiding the industry blueprint and focused entirely on the customer experience.

What would you do different if there was no blueprint?
How could you add some of these into what you are doing?

MIX IT UP: Avoid following people in your industry on social media. Even if your intention is to be different subconsciously you will take on some of their behaviours and ways of working. Find people/brands in different industries and be inspired to create from there.

Now let's look at the clothes we use to wear as kids... we thought we were cool, let's face it. We weren't worried about what people thought of us as we strolled through the supermarket wearing our princess outfits, plastic heels and mums make up! Yet we overthink so many things today. What do I wear, what shall I post on social media, what if I say no to someone, what if someone comes round and my house is a mess, what if I'm being to salesy, and the list goes on.

With this many thoughts about others and what they may think of us, no wonder we constantly run out of time. How can you expect to achieve those incredible dreams you have if you allow others to provide judgement of a dream, they know nothing about?

Take it back to self-awareness, understand why those things are worrying you and what is it revealing about yourself that is uncomfortable, only then can you create the space to overcome them. A space of freedom and confidence to own all you are and that which you strive for.

What would you do if there was no judgement?
What positives would happen if you started doing those things?
How can you slowly build up to it?

MIX IT UP: When overthinking things, we tend to run through all of the possible negative outcomes, try flip your mindset to counteract these with all of the benefits.

Do

[doo]

to execute (a piece or amount of work): *to do a hauling job.*

The cake won't bake itself.

Well done for sticking with me so far, a mixologists job isn't an easy one but certainly satisfying when you get the mix just right!

Now you could have the best business coach, personal trainer and set of ingredients for your lovely cake, but unless you put in the work your business won't flow, your abs won't show, and your cake won't grow!

Reflecting back through all you have just read and the questions you have just answered, you will notice that there is a HOW questions at the end of each... whatever you answered here has now created your to do list. VOILA!

Being a BADASS B*tch in Business and Life

The things I will do with the knowledge and information I have just taken on board?
When will I have them done?

MIX IT UP: Being in the right frame of mind can really help to bring on that 'unstoppable' attitude, you know the one! It may be that you thrive in the mornings or maybe it's at 2am, use this time to work through some of the tougher tasks.

Thank you for allowing me to show you the world of mixology which you can apply to both business and life. A world where you don't have to fit in, a world where we keep exploring, experimenting, creating and doing, and a world where we set our own expectations.

MIXOLOGIST

[mik-sol-uh-jist]

The ability to creatively challenge the norms, unafraid to experiment, mix things up and bring all parts together in order to get their desired outcome.

Because you to are a mixologist, it's up to you how you use it and what you do with it!

ABOUT LAUREN

Exploring, creating, experimenting & doing since 1987. I have always been very curious about the world and why things are the way they are, not being afraid to challenge the norms. I think my parents would describe me as determined, independent, stubborn and maybe a little bossy!

As someone who under performed at school, with no interest in college and moving from one job to another due to the lack of stimulation to grow but also to continue to challenge my own ability and push my boundaries. One thing that has been very consistent is the urge to go it alone and have my own business. Having more recently experienced life changing situations my mind has shifted from being super career focused to a drive for self-awareness, which I believe must come first in order to create the lifestyle your desire, then followed by the things to make that happen, i.e. starting your own business.

In 2019 the LDV brand was born, an idea that has evolved over time however the fundamental principle hasn't changed. To live in a world more personally and business aware, leaving a positive impact on others whilst creating a more fulfilled life.

CONNECT WITH LAUREN

[WEBSITE](#)

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PAMODZI

Roni Edwards – Pamodzi Creatives

[Pam-od-zee]. (adverb): Together

My love for my city, Portsmouth, runs deep. I am likely to politely walk you to the door with a list of alternative options if you live here and have nothing positive at all to say about the city. I am also Zambian born and grateful for the depth and colour the moulding of these two cultures has given me (like my inability to project a quietly poised, feminine, and cultured amused smile as opposed to my full blown hysterically-pitched belly laugh...I am working on it). The company name Pamodzi, meaning together, is a celebration of the two cultures meeting, but also embodies how I work and what I want to celebrate; collaborations, tribes, togetherness. Pamodzi Creatives is a community interest company that seeks to facilitate creative collaborations with a social theme. I want to live in a world where creativity has something to say and contributes in some positive way towards increased social awareness. Anyone who chooses to run their own organisation will do it from a place of passion. They will have at one point asked themselves what made them happy and decided to spend more time there. The challenge, for me at least, has not necessarily been the lack of passion, but the delicate balancing act of keeping one eye on finding ways that my passion can help pay the rent; for some community interest companies, the passion, and not the bottom line will be what gets you out of bed. For me, a part of this balancing act was addressed in the decision to put the income earning pressure on a separate part-time job that enabled me to freely develop the organisations. I also put in place around me a small tribe, who continue to walk alongside me and challenge me when needed.

Pamodzi first began in 2016 as a creative project and a progression from Dance-Africa³; an organisation I set up in 2007 which aims to facilitate creative collaborations between cultures. This was mainly outsourced through young people from the UK travelling to Zambia, where they creatively collaborated with young people from disadvantaged communities on a performance for the annual Barefoot Festival.⁴ Dance Africa also aims to develop a better understanding of how to best empower and support young people to gain employable workplace skills because we acknowledge that providing an opportunity to celebrate the arts has little substance without on the-ground partnerships that help vulnerable or disadvantaged young people. Growing up in Zambia and living in the UK, I am privileged to have experienced two very contrasting cultures; but alongside this privilege was the responsibility of presenting the vulnerable communities I worked with in Zambia in the most positive, empowered way. With this in mind, when raising funds for the project, I chose to do this through collaborating with local creative groups on an annual fundraising event - an urban club night - that also showcased the work done in both Zambia and Kenya. It was important to me that people would turn up to the club night not because they felt sorry for the 'poor young people in Africa', but because they wanted to hear more about the projects, and also because they knew that they would have an evening of entertainment worth paying for. I am not entirely sure I ever got this fundraising formula right and may well have made more money if I had added an additional donation bucket on the club nights. What I do know is that

³ For a short film of the project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QkmvRZixc>

⁴ <http://barefeettheatre.org/>

when people came to the club nights and watched the films about the projects, it was the creative finesse and the dance skills that made an impact on them. These were not homeless young people with a traumatic story to tell; they were incredible dancers and performers.

Passion continues to be my underlying narrative. Dance-Africa has grown into an organisation now run by the very same young people first involved in the project and my role has transitioned to an advisory and mentoring one. Alan Kurdi was the inspiration behind for Pamodzi Creatives. I still remember what Alan Kurdi was wearing when I first saw him. He was the same age, build and colouring as my son. Red top, blue shorts, cute little shoes. Lying face down on a peaceful, scenic-looking beach. Washed ashore as a tiny footnote to the refugee crisis. It took my breath away. Even now, I still feel slightly ashamed at how I had given the entire refugee crisis a slight shoulder-shrug of empathy. It was so far away, not near me. Nothing to do with me. Sad. But far away. Little baby Alan was the driving force behind my need to seek out local refugees and asylum seekers and sit at their feet as they told their stories, and gratefully, trusted me in-turn to re-tell their stories. I am deeply indebted to the incredible team around me that enabled the multigene collaboration that was What are you doing here mate?⁵ I have always appreciated the importance of having mentors to guide me, but also of mentoring and supporting others. I developed this first dance-theatre production⁶ with one mentor who guided me creatively and another who guided me in developing the organisation. The production was performed in Portsmouth and London with a cast of 60 dancers, actors and, because I am so delightfully random, a portrait artist who did a live life-sized portrait of one of the refugees as part of the performances.

Pamodzi still has a strand of work that focuses on the refugee crisis, through storytelling projects, but another personal transition turned my focus to women in my city. I found myself paying more attention to what people said about the city, and I saw the slight slump of shoulders, and unfocused gaze in some of the women I would walk past reflected in what was being said about the city. And yet, I was surrounded by incredible women, quietly making an inspirational impact in so many different contexts. And so, the Inspirational Women of Portsmouth passion project was born; first as a podcast series, then as my passion to celebrate women grew, so did my vision.

Working towards International Women's Day, a social media campaign integrates short films and podcasts with a nomination process that culminates in an evening of celebration. City residents are encouraged through this campaign to nominate any individual identifying as a woman/girl they consider inspirational because of her positive impact in the community. That community might be city wide, or a specific organisation, group or sector. It is a celebration of the 'ordinary', often overlooked, women, who make a difference to the lives of others. The project includes an Apprenticeship scheme for young people to take a lead in shaping the project. A panel of trailblazers from various industries are invited to be on the selection panel. In keeping with the belief in tribes and togetherness, we don't call our award recipients 'winners'. We call them 'Award Recipients', because we know that behind every inspirational

⁵ What Are You Doing Here Mate? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L80KRTVloa4&t=11s>

⁶ This project was followed by a sight-specific dance-theatre piece which contrasted our historic 4 relationship with the 10000 Kinder Transport survivors of World War 2 with missing 10,000 refugee children currently in Europe <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-X7kiFhSZo>

woman is a tribe that she represents. The award event itself is also a celebration of the talent and creativity of Portsmouth and includes a wide range of local entertainment. The Inspirational Women of Portsmouth project is now entering its third year and it wouldn't look the same if I didn't have mentors around me that I trusted to help mould and guide me, because the learning must never stop.⁷

I hope I am creating a world where creativity has something to say and contributes in some positive way towards a social theme. Having a project like this would be vacuous if it stopped at celebrating a handful of people so we have partnered with PARCS⁸ to ensure that the funds we raise also support a vital service in the city. Creative collaborations with something to say is my passion, and this is where I want to spend more time. But I am also acutely aware that I have a lot to learn and businesses cannot run on passion alone. So, I continue to seek out and surround myself with people who I can learn from. And it's because I know I have a safe tribe around me that I can also engage in learning from the critical voices that don't always understand my mission or even strongly disagree with it. Every project I have done has had these voices running in tandem and, actually, that's absolutely fine. In fact, it is an important part of evolution because, if you let them, everyone has something to teach you.

ABOUT RONI

Roni Edwards is Director of Pamodzi Creatives & Dance-Africa Pamodzi, which means 'together' is a Community Interest Company that supports PARCS (Portsmouth Abuse & Rape Counselling www.parc.org.uk) through the Inspirational Women of Portsmouth Project. The project includes an apprenticeship scheme, a nomination process & award event, as well as community story telling projects. Pamodzi has also been involved in creative dance-theatre collaborations that tackle social themes such as the refugee crisis and domestic violence. Dance-Africa aims to facilitate creative collaborations for young people in disadvantaged communities in Zambia & Kenya. It also continues to learn how to best empower and support young people to gain employable workplace skills & currently runs a school sponsorship program for street-children. Roni is also a Specialist curriculum-led dance practitioner trained at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Dance.

CONNECT WITH RONI

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⁷ A short film about the project is available here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDEZXSzJ_Yo

⁸ Portsmouth Abuse and Rape Counselling Service <https://www.parc.org.uk/>

STRASSIONATE

[Strategic + Passionate]

Adrienne Saunders – Yes You Can Training

A person who is able to act upon their strong emotions and passion in life but instead of responding to them with emotionally hijacked and knee-jerk reactions, use their passion strategically when they can be directed towards their long-term goals.

How can one person be strategic and passionate all at the same time?

Doesn't being strategic entail being reflective, digging deeper into analysis and collecting data to make more informed decisions, as opposed to being passionate about what you do and putting your heart and soul into your life and career - sometimes making decisions on the cuff, based on how you feel rather than what you think?

How can these two opposing traits be reconciled and work in harmony within one person?

Being passionate and completely dedicated to making business and career work no matter how hard the process may be is what drives us to succeed.

Passion in business can help you succeed. It's what drives you, gets you out of bed in the morning and keeps you going despite the difficulties you encounter.

However... passion can also be dangerous to your business.

Passion can make you do things that aren't worth doing or make decisions that aren't the best for your business or career.

Very early on in my career there were times when my passion for success actually held me back from moving forward. As a young leader I used to be passionate about achieving and never let my eye off the ball: targets, KPIs and success were my biggest motivators.

One day a big mistake has been made by the team I was leading. A shipment of one of our biggest clients has been lost. The client was furious and impatient and so was I.

Feeling angry and frustrated, I walked over to a team member I suspected made the mistake and held them responsible. I didn't plan what I was going to say; I acted upon my feelings and beliefs... and I was clearly in a heightened emotional state, feeling the pressure from both the client and my leadership to find a culprit and then a solution.

My team member patiently listened to me vent, express my anger and dissatisfaction at how this issue was handled. Once I got over my big scene, she quietly said: "I wasn't involved in the handling of this shipment."

I got the wrong person. I was so impatient and acted upon how I felt, that I basically started to shout with the first person I laid my eyes on.

Being a BADASS B*tch in Business and Life

I felt like someone just poured cold water over me and spent the whole weekend thinking about what happened, and what I could have done differently. I kept replaying the whole scenario and analysed every detail.

Clearly my emotions and passion for achieving have hijacked my clear and strategic thinking.

I swore to myself that this shall never happen again. My aim was to become the best leader I could be and I realised that I needed to use the passion I had for my career, leadership and success in a more controlled and strategic way.

I needed to work on my Emotional Intelligence.

This is when my journey to become a strassionate person began.

It was time to plan every detail of this transformation and the steps I needed to take to make the change happen.

Within a few weeks of the incident with the shipment I had a plan of action ready:

- 1) I researched Emotional Intelligence to understand more about the relationship between being strategic and passionate and how I could use this to become the leader I wanted to be.

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to recognise, understand and manage their feelings and emotions, as well as those of others.

Emotional intelligence has the following four components:⁹

Self-Awareness: your ability to accurately perceive your own emotions in the moment and understand your tendencies across situations.

Self-Management: your ability to use your awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and direct your behaviour positively.

Social Awareness: your ability to accurately pick up emotions in other people and understand what is rely going on for them.

Social Management: your ability to use your awareness of your own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully.

- 2) I took an Emotional Intelligence assessment to establish which of the four elements I needed to improve on and what my biggest emotional triggers were.

⁹ Travis Bradberry, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*

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- 3) I created my own Emotional Intelligence action plan based on the assessment and proceeded to put it into action.

Becoming a strassionate person was not an easy process and understanding my feelings, emotional triggers and how to manage them in order to get the best out of situations and my environment took a lot of effort and practice.

What truly helped me understand the need for this change was the idea that if I continued to make decisions in a heightened emotional state I might not make the most strategic one, the decision that is the best for my career or business.

As a result of having worked on my Emotional Intelligence I have introduced a five-step system between me becoming aware of my feelings having been triggered by a situation and making a decision about how I am going to react.

Before reacting to a trigger situation, I ask myself the following five questions:

1. What am I feeling right now and what exactly triggered these feelings?
2. Is my desired reaction coming from an emotional place and what happens if I don't react to this issue right now?
3. Have I got any biases and prejudices regarding this issue?
4. What were the true motives behind the other person's actions?
5. What do I need to do to get the best outcome in this situation?

I am very grateful to have discovered Emotional Intelligence early in my career and having put these strategies in place meant that I could grow as a leader and pursue career heights that I never thought possible before.

A couple of years later, I was renowned for being a passionate leader famous for being able to deal and manage any type of heated situation, difficult customer conversations or internal disputes, in a way that made all parties stifled and happy with the solution.

I have achieved what I wanted.

I've become "strassionate" and it was the best investment into my growth and business career.

ABOUT ADIE

A professional, articulate and driven corporate trainer with over 10 years of experience in building highly effective teams for a wide range of small, medium and multinational companies such as General Electric (Engineering), Promod (Retail Fashion), Gold's Gym (Leisure) & Sweaty Betty (Luxury Sports Retail).

I've graduated from the Master Trainer Institute in Geneva and worked delivering training to organisations across a diverse range of industries including Deloitte, Bank of England, Countryside Properties, Leica Geosystems and Tusker.

My background is in team gymnastics, having personally achieved World and European Championship medals. Reaching that level requires resilient teamwork, crystal clear communication, with a constant evaluation of performance and reflection on how to improve. These sporting skills have driven my success in business which I now get to share with professionals inspiring them to reach their full potential. I have been mentoring for over

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10 years, specialising in supporting women in building up and strengthening their business confidence in order to achieve their career goals.

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EMPOWERFIDENCE

[Empowerment + Confidence]

Annelies James – Expertly Personal

I was inspired to create this co-authored book when my best friend gave me a copy of *The Emotionary: A Dictionary of Words That Don't Exist for Feelings*.¹⁰ As I read through it, I couldn't help laughing at all the emotions we feel that we just can't explain and how complex we really are. We are so lucky to be a species that can develop and manipulate language to suit our needs - the COVID-19 pandemic, a testament to this fact with the quarantini, covidioti and corona-cation all being born.

Coming from a personal brand perspective, your uniqueness is fundamental, making you different and distinct from other people. We are all like fingerprints I guess, different parts, experiences, influences and passions making us who we are. Our own genetic, psychological, and emotional blueprint, if you like. I personally find this very empowering, and I strongly believe that everyone would benefit from tapping into their uniqueness more to become more confident in their lives.

My two words. Empowerment and Confidence.

When I break down my own brand blueprint and consider what really makes me, me, it is these two words. Not only because they are words I strive towards, but also because I make it my mission to help others to recognise and feel these ways too. When I first started working around the field of personal branding, I noticed a lot of the same sort of content – success, influence, perfection, lifestyle... but it is a little phoney if you ask me. We aren't and can't be those things all the time and as much as we might like to share beautiful lifestyle photos living our “perfect life” it just isn't realistic. If your content focuses on more materialistic aspects that aren't meaningful or fulfilling, you are inevitably going to hit a brick wall and the wall will be called unhappiness. I say this of course from personal experience, previously being married, having a BMW sports car, holidays with a £15,000 price tag multiple times per year, the best “stuff” money could buy – but the truth was it was incredibly isolating, unfulfilling and meaningless.

Now I strive for realism, the confidence to share my real, authentic self, the good and bad; and I strive to feel confident right here and right now. Finding fulfilment in the small moments, existing in savouring fleeting feelings, the sound of the ocean, listening to the breeze rippling through leaves.

I believe we place a lot of our confidence focus extrinsically. What do people think of me? Do people see me as confident? Do I look successful to others? (success often being seen as a byproduct of confidence). But real confidence is inside you. I like to think of it as a small ruby coloured gem that lives right next to my heart space, a little, beautiful stone, solid and finite, immovable, residing inside me. But you can imagine confidence as whatever you like.

¹⁰ *The Emotionary: A Dictionary of Words That Don't Exist for Feelings*. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Emotionary-Dictionary-Words-Exist-Feelings/dp/0448493845>

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The confidence whispers to me... “you got this.” “you can do it.” “you don’t need to prove anything.” It is intrinsically focused, it doesn’t give a shit about competitors, the things people say, or the way people say it.

One of my favourite quotes is “confidence is silent, insecurities are loud.” Thinking about this, you can see this on its surface level, but you can also look at it with the focus on silence. What is silence – calm, focused, determined, small. How do we feel when we are silent? I feel time-affluent, reflective, meditative. CONFIDENT.

I both internalise my confidence, imagine it as a tangible and unbreakable thing, but I also fill my confidence cup regularly. I top-up my confidence through silence, reflection, real connection and being around others who inspire this confident energy. I avoid energy vampires or toxic people who for me are too emotional, narcissistic, dramatic, angry people and people who talk too quickly or too much. I have edited a lot of friendships in the last couple of years, it is a real deal breaker for me.

Empowerment feeds from confidence, I would argue that they co-exist. Where confidence is silent, resilient and strong; empowerment is charging forward with that ownership and putting it into practice. Practice might look like:

- Taking more risks
- Being more open
- Sharing yourself more with others
- Saying how you really feel

You don’t have to put it into practice of course, but there is something about the courage of your convictions and putting yourself out there that really solidifies the confidence and can change other people’s lives. And let’s face it, empowerment just for ourselves is OK but again can it become quite unfulfilling and self-serving. Aren’t we here on this planet right now for our average 30,000 days to make a difference, leave a legacy, create positive change?

That is why I do it. Why I bother with any of the stuff I do, my projects, my business - call it personal branding or being purposeful in how others see you. I do it because I feel that little gem inside me, the comfort in silence, the deep sense of self-connectedness that enables me to be empowered and put into practice the things that are sometimes scary, sometimes open and sometimes vulnerable. But being that person to show the way benefits others. People contact me all the time and reference the various things I am doing, listing my achievements and explaining how it has inspired them, empowered them and motivated them. That is what I am here for.

But like all things, slowly, slowly with this stuff. You don’t get confident overnight nor do you feel empowerment by swallowing a magical pill. I have spent years figuring myself out and it is really hard graft. I recently started a counselling course, specifically to undertake personal development and to give myself time and focus on myself, it felt selfish to start with but now I would advocate everyone do continual personal develop in their life. As Carl Jung

(psychotherapist) said it is “the privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.”¹¹ It might be a privilege but is also like a baptism of fire, exploring all the different things that make me, me, the good experiences and bad in equal measure, the great and terrible choices I’ve made, the things I feel embarrassed by, ashamed of, the times I have felt pure contentment and freedom. One big boiling pot of everything, enough to forge a rock-solid, core that understands and accepts itself. Enough to create a totally unique being, a fingerprint of a person, whose catalogue of experiences, thinking, and emotion can be used to create positive change in other people’s lives. If you are going to take your own journey into confidence and empowerment, do it for those reasons.

ABOUT ANNELIES

Annelies is passionate about helping people define themselves, be noticed and build connection through personal brand and videography, although she does all sorts of other things too. She set up her business in 2018 and has flourished being her own boss, mainly because she gets to do it her own way. Annelies is the host of Colleagues Getting Coffee, co-author of The Female Edge and co-curator of TEDxSouthampton. She is always seeking new adventures both professionally and personally. If you are interested in collaborating, particularly on co-authored projects in the future, then get in touch!

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¹¹ Rogers, C. R. (1959). A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science, Formulations of the person and the social context* (Vol. 3, pp. 184–256). New York: McGraw-Hill.

BOUNDARIES

Kerri L Watt

When I think about any successes in my business journey, I can quite easily sum up the reason in one word. Boundaries.

Setting boundaries is what helped me start my business with a young baby in my arms. I wasn't on the clock working 24 hours a day. In truth, even without a child, I didn't want to work all hours.

You know best what works for you and how will you choose to spend your time. Setting your own boundaries may seem like a barrier at first, but truly it is the best gift you can give yourself.

Here's how to set your own boundaries to preserve your energy, build your career and ultimately live a happier life because of it.

Clients and colleagues

If you reply to their email at 10pm then they will expect you to reply at all hours. It's not their fault. They're not emailing at that hour for an immediate response, but by replying and conversing with them they will instantly think it's fine and keep doing it.

Rather than get angry with the other party, I believe it crucial to look inward first and consider how I can manage this and make a change. Often, it is just setting times when I will check and respond to email.

Family

I first started setting boundaries when my son was tiny. My family would call to check in with me in the evenings or at nap times. Both these times were prime working hours for me. Whilst it was lovely they wanted to reach out, afterwards, it made me angry because I'd missed out on work time that I had to then make up and go to bed at 1am. Working extra when you only have tiny pockets for work and having 4 hours sleep is not sustainable.

When my son started going to a childminder six hours a week so I could work, this HAD to be my work time. Again, my family thought I'd be free and would contact me for a chat, knowing full well it was my work morning. And again, I answered it then was angry when I hadn't achieved anything.

I had to make a change.

Allowing people to distract you impacts your mood as well as the level of tasks you can complete. I have a 'magpie brain' and get distracted easily. If you're 'in' the zone, you need to make the most of it.

If I didn't need my phone on in case someone called about my son I would have loved to turn my phone off completely in order to concentrate. Instead, I stopped answering personal calls in work time and advised those close to me my working hours. It soon calmed down, I got to concentrate, and my stress levels decreased incredibly!

Work interruptions

From my experience, I have to respect the working hours so others will too. When I've stayed with other people and had to work, they would come in the room when I was on the phone to clients or interrupt every five minutes, despite being told I had calls and work to do in this room alone.

If I had given in to this and continued conversations at every entry, they would have assumed it was ok and kept doing it. It's easy to get frustrated with people but in reality, it isn't their fault.

Being clear that I'm in work mode and not engaging much when being disturbed helped me to not be interrupted again (well, not as much anyway!)

Making yourself available

When you work for yourself or work from home it's easy for friends and family to think you are always available. I'm asked to run errands or meet for coffee a lot. All these things technically I do have the capacity to do, but I mostly need notice and can't drop things to go to the post office for Granny.

Of course, emergencies are another story. If someone needs me, I'm there. This is why I'm self-employed, so I can be there for my son and immediate family.

I find setting free time into the schedule or allowing yourself, for instance, one coffee date or one morning to play hookey a week really helps. That way you don't get stressed out when something comes up and you can rejig your week to still get everything done.

"Can I pick your brains?"

I am inundated with requests to meet me for coffee. Whilst I love coffee, I simply do not have the time to meet all these people. I have a business to run and a child to pick up from school. A simple coffee meeting could take up an entire workday when you include travel and I just can't lose that without an objective. If it is to meet a potential client, then yes maybe, but if someone just wants free advice and to "pick my brains" then I have to politely refuse.

Not only do these types of meetings take you out of the office for a day, but it's also asking you to work for free. Plus, the expense of travel, a day lost that you could have charged for, and the cost of lunch. If I met up with people who would never hire me, I wouldn't have a business, I would have a very expensive hobby.

I run a consultancy business; my brain is the money-maker. I sell coaching packages, training workshops and one-off PR strategy sessions, so in essence, I would be doing myself out of a job if I gave everything away for free in coffee meetings. I share masses of tips for free online through live streams and free training on social media and my mailing list. There are plenty of opportunities for people to access advice from me for free so I often will point them towards these if I cannot make a coffee meetup.

I have offended people in the past when refused this. No matter how polite you are, some people may not understand why you won't give up your time to help them. When it comes down to it, you don't owe this stranger anything. It may feel like you want to help the world, but that's why I believe the internet, or your free content is a great place to point people to.

Perhaps, if you enjoy meeting new people, you could set a goal and put a monthly limit on it, so it doesn't eat into too much of the time where you need to be generating income. In short, it is absolutely ok to say no.

The right fit

When it comes to clients, I used to work with anyone who enquired and said then said yes to my proposal. I've learnt that this is not the ideal scenario. It has to be the right fit. You have to work with the right people, whether it's clients or the dream job, it has to fit.

Knowing who you want to work within itself is setting a boundary. There is an ideal client and a line in which you should not cross. Speaking from experience, when you take on bad clients it can lead to sleepless nights, days of worry, even lawsuits if things go sour.

Now when people enquire to work with me, I qualify them to see if they are at the right stage for me to help before we even get on the phone. If I see any warning signs that there could be challenges later down the line, I will politely express it isn't the right fit.

It's a tricky one, but once you know who that ideal person you want to work with, it's more than fine to stick to that. You do not have to work with everyone who sends in an enquiry.

Energy vampires and mood hoovers

As with anything, we can be our own worst enemy sometimes, often without realising. Boundaries first come from within before we can put them into play with others.

Personally, I do not enjoy the feeling of aimlessly scrolling through social media and yet I waste hours doing it. Protecting your energy is crucial so if this type of time suck isn't benefiting your wellbeing, try to turn your phone off and walk away.

Running your business from a laptop or phone from anywhere in the world is an absolute joy. I feel beyond grateful to be able to do this. Yet to do this, I have all the apps on my phone making it hard to switch my brain off when I'm off the clock.

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It's incredible how much social media triggers me, even as a happy chipper person, seeing other people's news or opinions I don't agree with, it all adds up to ineffective use of my energy. To avoid temptation and checking social media a hundred times a day, I will just turn my phone off or put it in a different room in order to focus or have downtime.

Protecting your energy also relates to your personal life too. It's easy to get sucked into other people's dramas. I've quietly retreated from various friendships over the last few years as I realised it had become a habit rather than a joy to see them. It's imperative for me to conserve my energy (I need it for myself, my son and my business!) I made peace with walking away from, what I like to call, 'energy vampires' or 'mood hoovers'.

Of course, you can't walk away from everyone, but you can decide what the line is and who's allowed to cross it. With family, I learned that certain topics led to massively negative conversations or it left me feeling really awful. So now I know which topics to not bring up around certain people and it really works!

Whether its friends, family, social media or other people's dramas, remember to protect yourself from this negative energy.

Working from home

I've been working from home properly for six years and before then on-and-off for five years. It's been constant learning exercises of how one works best, and also fitting in child-raising too. Working from home requires its own set of boundaries, whether it's yourself and when your working hours are, with other members of the household or people you work with externally.

Having worked from spaces in various homes over the years I've learned a lot about how I work best. I only work at the time of day my brain works and will have set times where I take client calls, so my diary isn't too chaotic with random appointments spread out through the week.

Some people struggle with the distraction of the house and chores. For me, I work from home by choice, so I enjoy popping the washing on in between client calls or working from my laptop on the sofa. That being said, I do still set some boundaries around head-down-do-not-disturb work time in my home office when I need to.

It isn't for everyone, but if you find out what makes you productive and how best to splice home and work life then it can be a really wonderful experience.

Reframe

It may feel really uncomfortable at first to set some boundaries. Whether your boundaries are personal or work-related, it can feel internally that you are being selfish or a bit of a diva. A quick mindset shift around how it

If you're still stuck, consider the end goal for a moment. Think about how it would feel if, for example, the family left you alone to work for a few hours with no interruptions, or if your clients weren't emailing expecting replies at the weekend. That would feel pretty good right?! Use that to fuel you forward.

It is not selfish to set boundaries. It is to protect yourself and your energy... and *that* is always ok.

Walk the walk

Often, we can sabotage our own experiences when it comes to setting boundaries. To allow others to respect these small 'rules' we've put in place, we need to firstly live by them.

If we tell clients, a boss or colleagues we only check out emails once a day but in reality, we reply throughout the entire workday, they won't really get that message and will expect a reply at all hours.

You have to walk the walk, and not just talk the talk. The way you act as well as communicate around your personal boundaries, no matter how tiny, has a huge impact on how others perceive and respect them.

If we want others to respect us, that has to come from within right the way through.

Respect yourself first

When it comes to setting boundaries, I've noticed that when I let these boundaries slip, my demeanour changes.

Each time I notice myself aimlessly checking each app on my phone at night, I say to myself "If you check your work email, what are you going to do with it? Are you going to reply?" The answer is always no. So, in reality, why on earth would I go and read emails to not action them. It sucks a little of my mojo because I put myself back in work mode when I'm trying to relax. Saying this to myself helps me catch myself out and remember to only check certain apps when I'm back 'on the clock'.

Without a doubt, setting such boundaries for myself is what has ultimately led to my success. When I look back at the times I spoke to clients and was not paying attention because my heart was pumping so bad as my baby had just woken up, it makes me shudder.

Setting boundaries may seem like a barrier, but ultimately it is the best gift you can give yourself.

ABOUT KERRI

Kerri L Watt is the author of the international bestselling PR book Get a YES! from the press. From her base in the New Forest, Hampshire, she runs a PR consultancy supporting companies to manage their own epic PR in-house.

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Specialising in brand reputation and PR for small to medium businesses, Kerri helps business leaders and marketing teams become magnets for new clients and media opportunities.

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