

HOUSE OF HIVES FOUNDER AND CEO, MAGS THOMSON:  
PERSONAL STORIES CREATE  
EXPONENTIAL BUSINESS GROWTH

DISCOVER YOUR UNIQUE  
LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

5 REASONS EVERY  
ENTREPRENEUR  
SHOULD WRITE A  
**BOOK – NOW**

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
IN BUSINESS WITHOUT  
SACRIFICING YOU?

**FEM** 

# WELCOME.

Welcome to FEM, a magazine for entrepreneurs who are ready to ditch the over-competitive hustle culture and want to embrace balance, collaboration and diversity.

FEM stands for Feminist Entrepreneurs Magazine (or Finally Eradicating Misogyny, if you're feeling cheeky), and is a House of Hives publication. We started this magazine to support entrepreneurs who feel disenchanted with the 24/7 hustle culture, the competitive narrative of toxic masculinity and narrow definitions of success, value and wealth that it peddles. We want to talk about balance, the importance of mental health, the power of collaboration and diversity, and much more.



**Stories are light.  
Light is precious in a  
world so dark.**

**- KATE DICAMILLO**



We hope to inspire and support you as you build your business in enjoyable and sustainable ways, by sharing stories and tips from entrepreneurs, thought-leaders and change-makers.

In this first edition, I've included interviews with people who inspire me and articles to introduce House of Hives and what the team and I do there to support entrepreneurs bring change to the world.

Have fun!

**Mags Thomson**

Editor In Chief

# WHAT'S INSIDE



**HOW PERSONAL STORIES CREATE  
EXPONENTIAL BUSINESS GROWTH**

04

**HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS  
WITHOUT SACRIFICING YOU?**

08

**BEING A FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR IN A  
MASCULINE WORLD**

12

**ARE YOU A FEMINIST ENTREPRENEUR  
WITH STORIES TO TELL?**

15

**DISCOVER YOUR UNIQUE LEADERSHIP  
POTENTIAL**

16

**IS CONSTANT REINVENTION THE KEY  
TO SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURSHIP?**

20

**HOW TO STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT  
ZONE TO CREATE LIFE ON YOUR TERMS**

24

**5 REASONS EVERY ENTREPRENEUR  
SHOULD WRITE A BOOK – NOW**

28

**HOW HAVING A DIVERSITY STRATEGY  
WILL INCREASE YOUR SLICE OF THE  
MARKET SHARE**

32

**IS EMBRACING BRILLIANCE THE  
HUSTLE ANTIDOTE?**

36

**HOW TO SLAY IMPOSTOR SYNDROME  
AND BUILD YOUR DREAM BUSINESS**

40

**THE LETTER ON THE KITCHEN TABLE  
- A CHAPTER FROM THE POWER OF REINVENTION**

44

**HAVE YOU ALWAYS DREAMT OF  
BECOMING A PUBLISHED AUTHOR?**

51

**HOW CONSCIOUS EMBODIMENT WILL  
UPEVEL YOUR LIFE AND BUSINESS**

52

**HOW TO BECOME CONSCIOUSLY SELF-  
AWARE AND EMPOWER YOUR BUSINESS**

56

**MORE TO READ IN FEM**

60

# HOW PERSONAL STORIES CREATE EXPONENTIAL BUSINESS GROWTH

MAGS THOMSON - FOUNDER OF HOUSE OF HIVES

**Since I believe that we create human connection through the stories we tell, I figure it's only fair I share my own. So, as part of the Inspirational Interviews Series, let me share my own story and expertise.**

*By Mags Thomson*

I am FEM editor-in-chief, founder and CEO of House of Hives, award-winning story coach and impact co-creator, Mags Thomson. I am from the Amsterdam area of the Netherlands and first moved to The Hague for a job with a government agency. If you've ever watched a video on a social channel, or end up on a call with me, you may wonder why this Dutch woman sounds like a Scot.

Actually, I used to speak with a really posh and proper English accent that I picked up from a friend who studied in Oxford. When I moved to Glasgow as a student, I had to adapt that pretty fast, haha! My husband is also from Glasgow though, which is probably why I've kept my Scottish accent. I often receive compliments from the locals here on how well I speak Dutch!

**Are there experiences from your past that have informed what you do now?**

I have been a storyteller for as long as I can remember. My first piece of writing is dated at age three and reads 'Oma' (the Dutch word for grandmother). In 2013, I co-founded [SwanWaters](#), a platform to support survivors of emotional abuse in rebuilding their lives. That is when storytelling became an integral part of my work, as I recounted my childhood and shared my healing. Through this work and my journey through trauma, I became increasingly aware of how the stories we are told in life impact the stories we tell ourselves, and how they feed into the choices we make in life. As I healed my stories, I changed my personal narrative. Now, I am ready to do the same for the world at large.

Within [House of Hives](#), I help women use their personal

stories in their business, bridging the gap between emotive storytelling and strategic marketing by creating collaborative publications, like FEM. This doesn't just transform the world, but also our client's businesses. It establishes them as authorities in their fields, supports their SEO, engagement and networking opportunities and helps them connect with new prospective clients.

**How did you get here? What inspired your business?**

As I mentioned, I started my entrepreneurial as a co-founder and the manager of SwanWaters. When the organisation lost its funding toward the end of 2019, it meant I was looking for new ways to serve the world with my expertise. After so many years of sharing such personal and emotional stories about my life, I had learned a lot-sometimes the hard way-about how emotive sharing in your marketing can be effective but also challenging. I realised I wanted to help entrepreneurs do just that, preferably without the massive learning curve.



**What are some of your daily practices to maintain your work-life balance?**

Hebe, my ex-service dog, has been very helpful in maintaining a work-life balance. About two years ago, I decided I wanted to get more structure into my day, which, when working from home as a freelancer can be really hard. I think I am not the only one who has found myself still in my pyjamas at 5 pm faced with having to go to the shops, haha! That's why I wanted a dog, but Bella, our cat, is super anxious. So we were like, it needs to be a dog who is super chill.

We were really lucky to get Hebe through my Aunt. She's in a wheelchair and has a service dog called Hana, who is amazing. Hana's sister, Hebe, was a service dog and the work was stressing her out. She was getting really anxious,



**I HAD LEARNED A LOT -SOMETIMES THE HARD WAY-ABOUT HOW EMOTIVE SHARING IN YOUR MARKETING CAN BE EFFECTIVE BUT ALSO CHALLENGING. I REALISED I WANTED TO HELP ENTREPRENEURS DO JUST THAT, PREFERABLY WITHOUT THE MASSIVE LEARNING CURVE.**

so she was barking at everything and kept trying to dig through the floor in the house as an escape attempt, which is very sad. They had to retire her early, unfortunately, which was also super hard for the family who had her obviously. And so she'd been returned to her trainer who was also the trainer of my aunt's dog. And that's how we got Hebe.

She has completely recovered from her anxiety and spends her days looking cute and requesting cuddles. She still loves (LOVES) taking gloves off and picking things up from the floor.

### **What change would you like to see in the world of work and business?**

While I was working through my experiences with childhood emotional abuse and the C-PTSD I developed through it, I became painfully aware of how unaccommodating most workplaces are to anything that is considered inefficient. The ethos is "leave your personal shit at the door". It's all very well saying that, but where would you like me to put it during office hours? "Could you please point me in the direction of your 'emotional baggage drop'?" Wouldn't that be great if you had some kind of "trauma lockers", where you could

just leave anything inconvenient and perform in life and at work, unaffected by all that has happened to you in life? Haha.

But that's not how we work; we are complex human beings. Organisations and business owners need to become more compassionate about the fact that we are operating every day informed and influenced by our personal life, the good, the bad and the ugly. That's what makes us all so beautiful though and gives us unique insights. It really is where the magic is.

### **How do you feel about diversity and collaboration in business?**

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do at House of Hives. The publications we put out, are all meant as a platform for entrepreneurs to co-create reach, sharing their audiences and supporting each others' businesses.

Like I said, it is in our individual experiences that we can find our unique talents and insights. So, by adding different experiences and viewpoints to our business, we can come to insights and results that we would not have been able to see from a homogenous perspective.

Learning from the experiences of others inspires

us and creates room for creative and innovative thinking. This is crucial in any business, and in fact in the world! Collaboration is literally coded into our DNA, we evolved to live in groups, after all. But our over-competitive societies have made us distrust everyone and has us stuck in me against the world mode. It really is time to change that, and begin creating genuine connections with people again. Listening to their stories and wisdom and sharing our own. Isn't there a Sesame Street song about it? "Two Heads Are Better Than One"

### **How has your (mental) health impacted your business?**

During the many years that I ran SwanWaters, my mental health was my business. I was processing, healing and holding space all at the same time. I realise now how exhausting that was. I wasn't put on this earth to hold space for trauma, and I remain in awe of people who can do this, and so enjoy being able to support them in that work.

Although my mental health has been fairly stable in recent years, the past year did present its share of challenges, and I dipped into old self-sabotaging behaviour a fair amount. I try to show myself compassion about it, and not to be too stern when that happens.

I am a firm believer in following the positive in order to tackle the challenges. We can't create solutions when staring blindly at the problems, because we keep our nervous system in survival mode which means we're creating tunnel vision for ourselves.

### **Where can people find you?**

You can follow any of the House of Hives social media channels below, or connect with me on [LinkedIn](#).

If you want to know more about having your story and expertise shared in support of your marketing, check out the [House of Hives services!](#)

[Instagram](#) | [Pinterest](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

*\*There is a Sesame Street song, you can listen to it here*



# HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS WITHOUT SACRIFICING YOU?

As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the opportunity to speak to intuitive business coach **Susanne Grant of Grant Method Coaching.**

By Mags Thomson

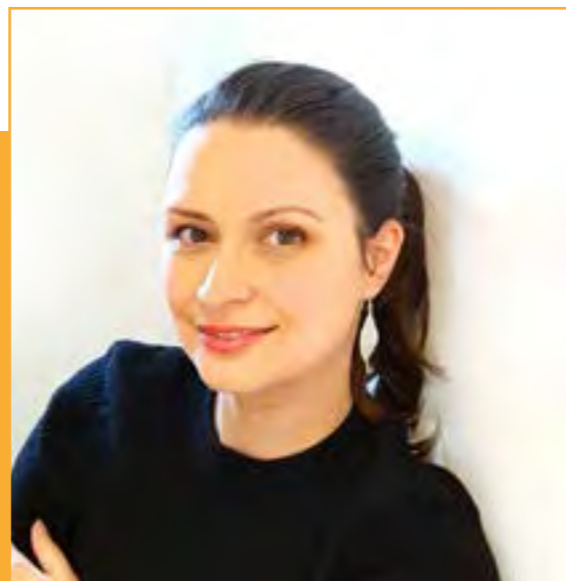
Susanne is an award-winning work-life balance integration expert, intuitive business coach & consultant and international best-selling author. She supports CEOs, entrepreneurs and conscious leaders to redefine success, so they have the impact they desire without sacrificing their health, relationships or themselves.

After the birth of her child in 2015, she realised the collective lie "hard work equals success" wasn't working for her, and she did not want the next generation to grow up

**"I realised the collective lie "hard work equals success" wasn't working for me and I did not want the next generation to grow up and think this was normal."**

## **SUSANNE SAYS: WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER**

to think this was normal. So, she made a powerful decision. She gave herself permission to break free of the old way of doing business and created a new business model - where holistic health and wealth are an integral part of the business and its success.



Today, she runs an award-winning coaching company and hosts sold-out masterminds and events. Her work has been featured in Thrive Global, Authority Magazine, Brainz Magazine, Billion Success and many more. In fact, thousands of people have benefited from her work and are now living life on their own terms as they implement Susanne's motto:

"Work Smarter, Not Harder."

# SUSANNE GRANT



**Susanne is an award-winning work-life balance integration expert, intuitive business coach & consultant and international best-selling author. She supports CEOs, entrepreneurs and conscious leaders to redefine success, so they have the impact they desire without sacrificing their health, relationships or themselves.**

## How did you get here? What inspired your business?

For years, I worked 60–80 hours per week easily and for a long time, this worked for me. Until my (mental) health caught up with me and I had to admit that working harder no longer was an option. I had to work smarter if I wanted to get everything done and not sacrifice my health, relationships or myself in the process. I learned how to listen to my body and intuition to create a life that works for me, my family and my business.

By the time I reached my 30s, I was completely burned out. After the birth of my daughter in 2015, I realised the collective lie “hard work equals success” wasn’t working for me and I did not want the next generation to grow up and think this was normal.

It was the journey of becoming a parent in a foreign country with little or no support for young mothers, that made me start my business. Even though I had to go through it alone, my clients don’t have to because they have me!

## What are some of your daily practices to maintain your work-life balance?

I prefer to look at my “daily” activities from a broader perspective to get everything “done”. Of course, I need to look after myself well, so I make sure I drink plenty of water and nourish my body with delicious & nutritious foods. On top of that, I meditate every night before bedtime. Over the week, I make sure to exercise regularly (as I need a lot of movement to stay in top shape physically-and pain-free) and make time for things like a nice bath, walks outside and crafting to get the creative juices flowing. It helps me to stay in alignment with my vision and goals, even if I am not working directly towards them. The better I feel, the more productive I am, so that’s why I have to come first.

**Being a success and feeling like a success are two completely different concepts that many of my clients struggle with.**



## What change would you like to see in the world of work and business?

“Work hard, sacrifice everything you got and you will succeed!” How often do you see this or statements like it? How we define success as a culture has led many entrepreneurs and business owners to struggle with guilt, anxiety, stress, burnout and more. With suicide still being the #1 cause of death for males in the UK (age 21–45) for example, I believe it is time to open up the dialogue about the importance of (mental) health and entrepreneurship.

The change I would love to see is a holistic approach where real health and wealth become part of the business model. As many are struggling with mental health nowadays, there couldn’t be a better time to make mental well-being part of the quarterly and yearly objectives. Success comes in different shapes, sizes and forms. And I think it is important for people to know that sacrificing everything you got for that “success” is not the only way to do things.

## How do you define success?

Being a success and feeling like a success are two completely different concepts that many of my clients struggle with. Emotions can range from feeling like an imposter, fear of missing out (FOMO) or feeling disconnected and empty on the inside even though your bank account is suggesting otherwise.

For me, success is a feeling that comes from within. No amount of goal setting is going to shift this on a structural level until you feel you are enough in your core. I feel like a success many times per day; when I see my babies dance, enjoy their delicious food that I paid for or when I get to work with clients. I feel proud of how far I have come, where I am and I am excited to see what else life has in store for me. That feeling of being satisfied in the moment whilst being eager for more, to me is the ideal state in which I can be a success.

## What’s the greatest motivation for running your business?

My greatest motivation for running my business is changing these generational patterns for the next generation, for myself as well as my clients. Because I don’t want my children to grow up thinking that mommy can only be stressed, worn down or unhappy whilst being in business. I want to show them you can create a rich and fulfilling life, in all aspects of life, not just your bank account. That’s why I am so passionate about creating this generational change because we hold the power and it stops with us.

## Do you have a “business pet peeve” that you come across often on social media etc.?

The thing that gets me is the number of gurus who are shouting that being successful only comes through working hard. It doesn’t and I am the living proof of that. Unfortunately, it gets portrayed as the only way to be a successful entrepreneur or business owner and that is simply not true. My message is all about doing what works for you, your family and your business and finding your unique path to success.

If you want to work 80–90 hours a week, have a healthy, strong body you look after well and you get to enjoy meaningful relationships, by all means, if you manage to do that, you have my blessing! But often there is just too much to do and too little time to do it all well. I want people to know that you can be successful without working that much. You can have your cake and eat it too. You can have what you want without sacrificing everything that you hold dear. Because let’s be honest here, is that real success anyway?

## Where can people find you?

The best way to connect with me is via [LinkedIn](#) and find out more about my work at [grantmethod.com](#). If you want to discover how you can be successful without sacrificing you, your relationships or your health? Take my 60-second quiz to help you [uncover your unique business success blueprint](#) today!



# BEING A FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR IN A MASCULINE WORLD



**I wanted to take a moment and talk a little more about the reasons I founded the House of Hives. My vision for the world and the issues that we are trying to change through the work we do. Because, isn't that what we'd all like to do, make the world a better place?**

*By Mags Thomson*

## This Is a Masculine World

Over the years it has become increasingly clear to me that our society functions on an overly competitive and productivity-driven masculine energy, and whether we are losing or winning at this game it causes us to constantly worry about making the grade, winning the prize, and not falling by the wayside. This system is based on the idea that there is a limited supply of everything, and we should get as much of the pie as we can. It is unsurprising (at least to me) that this is leading to many mental health issues such as burn-out, depression, and countless others.

**"Hegemonic Masculinity: cultural norm that continuously connects men to power and economic achievements."**

**European Institute for Gender Equality**

This system requires us to be superhuman productivity robots in pretty much all areas of our lives. There is a lack of authenticity, intuition, sensitivity, and compassion, especially in the business setting.

That is not to say that this state of the world is only serving men, because in many ways it is not. In fact, as explained in the Global Policy Journal, "The concept of hegemonic masculinity is premised on the existence of a dominant form of masculinity. All men position themselves in relation to it, and therefore internalise personal codes of behaviour that contribute to its reproduction. The pressure to conform and relate to this ideal dominant masculinity perpetuates this structure of gender-biased hierarchy in society."

So, to simplify that a little, our society has very specific and limited ideas of what makes a man a "real man". Anyone who doesn't fit that narrow stereotype, is dismissed as "lesser than". Since most people don't like being labelled as lesser than, they will try to attain the Real Man status. That means that men are less likely to show and process their emotions, and less likely to admit to things they find difficult because vulnerability is seen as weakness (and as feminine). This toxic masculinity obviously leaves little space for men to care for their mental and emotional needs, if only because the stereotype doesn't seem to think they have those needs.

The stereotype also affects women, and not just in the way it informs us about what a woman should

be (weak, submissive, emotionally unstable, and hormonal, FYI). The programming goes further than that.

## The Challenges of Female Entrepreneurs

By having to function in the status quo, many women struggle to achieve the measures of success as prescribed by the hyper-masculine system. Not only that, they are often made to feel that the only way to succeed in life, and especially in business, is to adopt this hyper-masculine system as their own. Research shows that female entrepreneurs are prone to give up earlier in building a business than their male counterparts. This can be explained by their lack of confidence induced by the patriarchal values in our society. Women struggle to be taken seriously and feel a constant need to prove themselves; prove they are successful enough, assertive enough, competitive, intelligent, rational, masculine enough!





Additionally, women are expected to carry the majority of household duty. Looking at the gender norms and values two or three generations ago, there has been progress. Yet, even when men are contributing more, women continue to be the project managers of their homes and families. This doesn't just mean that women take on much of the household tasks, it means they are also supposed to remember everything. This is called taking on the mental load of the household. French illustrator, Emma explains this concept in a hauntingly familiar series of images that centre around the idea that a man generally only participates in the house when he is asked to do so.

Balancing the household, and possibly parenting duties, with the demands of entrepreneurship only adds another challenge to the stack of challenges and expectations in the journey of a female entrepreneur.

Even when we are successful in our entrepreneurial journey, it seems that the societal expectations of women get in our way. "The communal, consensus-building qualities encouraged in young girls can leave women unintentionally downplaying their own worth." explains Business News Daily. This means we are more likely to experience imposter syndrome, or experience shame around charging (enough) for our services.

### Embracing the Feminine in Business

It seems that the challenges are endless. The good news is that when we embrace our femininity and balance ourselves, we tap into a whole spectrum of skills and insights that we may have previously overlooked. Moreover, it may inspire us to surround ourselves with other like-minded women.

**"When we support each other's businesses, we support our mutual empowerment. It is in that female empowerment that we can begin to see ways in which we can create a more balanced and grounded society."**

Research suggests that a key element to the success of a female entrepreneur is her support network. According to Inc.com "48 percent of female founders report that a lack of available advisers and mentors limits their professional growth." Knowing where to find the right support network isn't always easy. Perhaps you have tried women-focused networking events, or online forums and groups created specifically for women in business.

I feel however, that the support that women need goes beyond connecting with their peers. When we support each other's businesses, we support our mutual empowerment. It is in that female empowerment that we can begin to see ways in which we can create a more balanced and grounded society. One where we can all tap into both our masculine and feminine energies.

It is in that balanced sweet spot that we can take inspired action. Listening to our intuition to feed our mission, and allowing our masculine energy to drive us to action to make our vision come true.



# Are You a Feminist Entrepreneur With Stories to Tell?

FEM is a platform by and for feminist entrepreneurs who want to change their business and the world to be more balanced, inclusive and compassionate.

We include articles about such topics as Work/Life Balance, Mindset and Mental Health; Career, Business and Entrepreneurship; Success, Money and Abundance; Creativity and Innovation; Law of Attraction, Intuition and Energy

We hope to inspire and support entrepreneurs as they build their businesses in enjoyable and sustainable ways, by sharing stories and tips from thought-leaders and change-makers like yourself.

**We started FEM as a platform for entrepreneurs to share their stories and expertise around business and lifestyle while co-creating reach and impact.**

FEM invites everyone who feels aligned with our goals to contribute, we are all about inclusivity and equality after all!

### Are you interested in contributing to FEM?

Your contribution will help establish **authority**, share your offerings with **new audiences**, and it will even improve your **SEO**. All of those things will help you grow your business.

Would you like to know more about being featured in an interview or becoming a regular contributor? Get in touch with the House of Hives team by [sending us an email](#).



# Discover Your Unique Leadership Potential

**As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the opportunity to speak to Body-Confidence and Emotional Self-Leadership Coach Yasmin Igné of No Nonsense Confidence.**

*By Mags Thomson*

I met Yasmin Igné when she was a speaker for The Power of Reinvention Summit that House of Hives hosted in the summer of 2020. I was immediately interested in what she was doing and thoroughly enjoy her pragmatic and practical approach to body-confidence coaching.

She enables women to embrace their uniqueness by learning to love the way they look. Instead of making women's bodies look differently, she teaches women how to look at their bodies differently.



## How did you get here? What inspired your business?

It all started with my own boudoir photoshoot in London. I loved the images but the confidence-boost I felt when I looked at them did not translate into my everyday life because they showed a dolled-up version of me.

So, I started creating boudoir portraits for women myself-without professional hair and makeup, just women being their radiant selves. My photoshoot experiences always included weeks of preparation with the aim of building up my clients' self-confidence.

During the lockdown, my photoshoots were of course cancelled. But the requests for confidence advice kept increasing. So I combined all my professional expertise and personal experience into what is now my signature three-months body-confidence coaching programme.

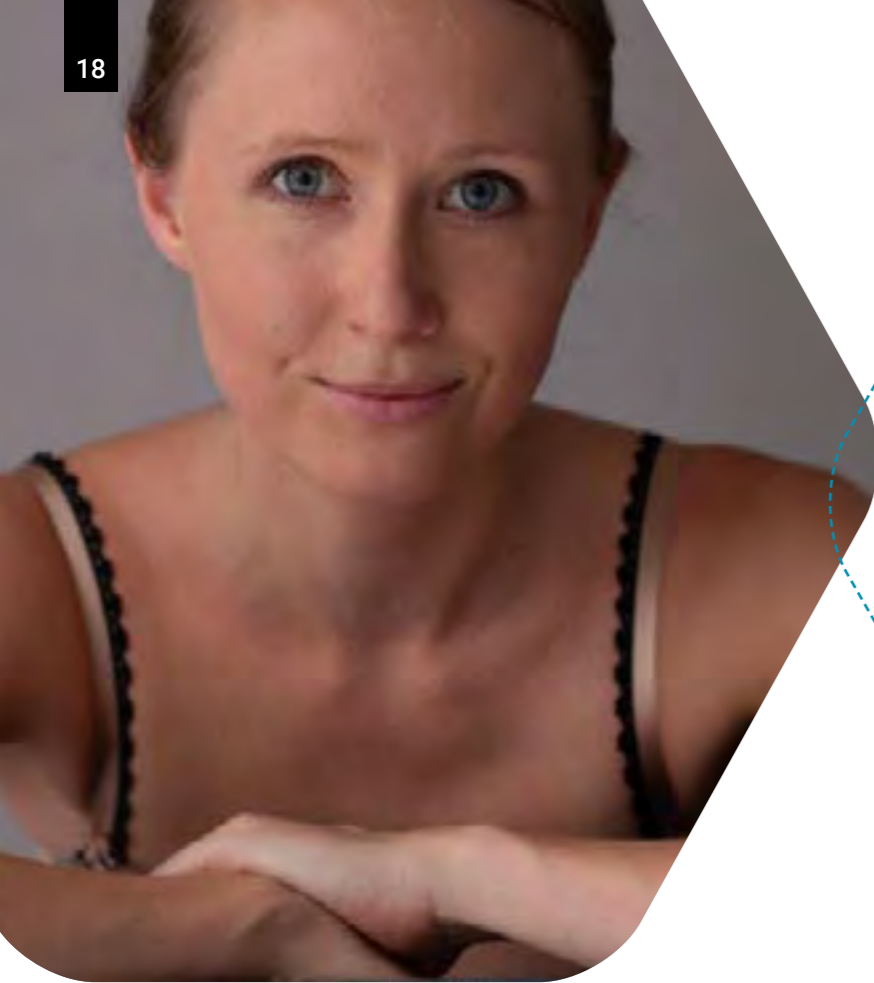
## What are you working on right now?

I have recently launched a business consulting version of the previously mentioned one-to-one coaching programme. There are so many small to medium-sized businesses that can benefit from integrating body-confidence techniques into their service offer. Think of entrepreneurs in the education, nutritional or creative sector.

We all work in highly competitive environments, so integrating complementary innovative features like this can easily become one's competitive advantage.

**THERE ARE SO MANY BENEFITS FROM  
US PROMOTING A WORK CULTURE THAT  
FAVOURS UNIQUENESS OVER UNIFORMITY**

**YASMIN IGNÉ**



## LEADERSHIP IS VISIONARY AND CREATIVE, THESE CHARACTERISTICS ARE DIRECTLY ROOTED IN OUR ABILITY TO PROFOUNDLY CONNECT WITH OUR OWN EMOTIONS.

### How do you hope your work will impact the world?

I want to revolutionise female leadership. I want women to embrace and value their uniqueness, starting with the way they look. I hope that none of us will ever limit ourselves because we fear what other people might think or say about us or what we stand for.

### As you grew the business, what have you learned about leadership?

Many have yet to realise it, but we have become accustomed to suppressing negative feelings. Especially when it comes to our physical appearance. Simply because we feel unequipped and often afraid to deal with them. What we need to realise is how much this limits the depth of our emotional intelligence and therefore our leadership capabilities.

Leadership is visionary and creative, these characteristics are directly rooted in our ability to profoundly connect with our own emotions.

### What change would you like to see in the world of work and business?

There are so many benefits from us promoting a work culture that favours uniqueness over uniformity. One aspect is obviously how much happier we will personally be when we have the courage and freedom to express ourselves authentically.

Yet there is a direct connection between us knowing and doing what we love and our overall productivity level, as well. That is what we need to recognise and implement in business next.

### What is your greatest motivation for running your business?

The fact is that humanity needs individuals to become role models of body-confidence. There is so much unnecessary sorrow connected with a low body image and self-esteem. Once we eliminate that preoccupation we have with the perceived imperfections of our physical appearance, we have so much energy to do truly inspiring and impactful work.

### Where can people find you?

I am always open to new connections on [LinkedIn](#), and for more detailed information about the services I offer, feel free to [visit my website](#).

As women, the key to our true power lies in our capacity for emotional intelligence grounded in the understanding and unconditional acceptance of our own uniqueness, our physical appearance included. Our highest potential for making an impact is therefore directly linked to our ability to powerfully and authentically embody who we are and what we stand for - for ourselves, for others and for humanity as a whole.

It all starts with us. It all starts with courageous, emotional self-leadership!

### Are you still wondering why feeling confident about your body is even relevant for women in leadership?

Well, besides the positive "side" effects of the potential for overall happiness, the simple truth is this: Even when you suppress your negative thoughts about your physical appearance, you are effectively raging war against yourself.

Every time that we choose to suppress negative emotions, we show our brain yet again that we do not trust ourselves to be able to effectively deal with our own challenging emotions. If our mind constantly overrules our emotions and therefore suppresses our intuition, our instinctive sense of direction is essentially hijacked. There is a subconscious part of us that is painfully aware of this truth already.

### We know that the time has come to support our brain in rectifying its approach towards emotional conflict resolution.

But at the same time, we are fearful of what might come up if we finally allow our walls to come down and for our buried emotions to surface. For as long as we can remember, we have been trying so hard to stay strong and not to lose control, afraid that being emotional meant being weak. Yet this fear of vulnerability also obscures the fact that, in order for us to unlock our fullest potential, we must embrace all that we are and our negative emotions are the most precise indicators of where to start.



# IS CONSTANT REINVENTION THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

**As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the pleasure to speak to international business coach, serial entrepreneur and the creator of Building Brand You™, Kym Hamer.**

*By Mags Thomson*

Kym Hamer is an international business coach, serial entrepreneur and the creator of Building Brand You™, a methodology helping organisations, teams and individuals to build visibility and reputational rigour as essential building blocks for delivering sustained business value. In 2020, she was nominated as one of the Top 100 Women in B2B leadership influencers and as one of the Top 25 in both Mindset/Mental Health and Entrepreneurship by Thinkers360, the world's first open platform for thought leaders.

As the founder of Artemis Futures, Kym is passionate about inspiring and equipping people to imagine, design and build profitable, future-fit businesses. She is also one of the founding board members of the Customer Experience & Service Association Middle East, director of CXSA Group Ltd and a trustee in the education sector.

And, she adds as I look at her with a look of exhaustion on my face, while she's not doing any of those things you will find her curled up in some corner with her nose in a book! Which we at House of Hives approve of!

**Tell us a little of your origins story, who is Kym?**

There's something about 'flying' that elicits a feeling of freedom for me. I jumped out of a perfectly good plane once-albeit attached to the front of someone more expert at it than myself-and during the free fall, I experienced such an overwhelming sense of exhilaration and peace that I never wanted it to end. I took flight again when I left Melbourne (Australia) for a life in London, one that I love deeply and am enormously proud to have built. Whilst some might not see so many changes, deep down I know myself very differently from the 34-year-old who left Melbourne back in January 2004.

At 46, I spread my wings and landed in the education sector



as a trustee of an amazing girls' school in North London and at 48 took a gap year when the company I worked for was acquired by our main competitor. It was an enormously enriching and indulgent period - I did things (or not) and spent time with people (or not) simply because I wanted to. And the following year I returned to look for my next role - after all, I was a corporate girl. Or so I thought!

My gap year had made more of an impact than I'd realised. I had spent all of my time focusing on discovering who Kym was without the corporate trappings but had spent no time exploring who I was with them. I'd been looking for a Kym-shaped box that simply didn't exist. So I was going to have to build one for myself, one with edges and curves in all the right places. Less than three months later, on January 1st 2019, I started Artemis Futures, a business coaching practice that helps people get results in their own business by unlocking their greatest asset - themselves. Later that year I joined a second start-up as a Managing Partner and in 2020

**THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT 'FLYING' THAT ELICITS A FEELING OF FREEDOM FOR ME. I JUMPED OUT OF A PERFECTLY GOOD PLANE ONCE-ALBEIT ATTACHED TO THE FRONT OF SOMEONE MORE EXPERT AT IT THAN MYSELF-AND DURING THE FREE FALL, I EXPERIENCED SUCH AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF EXHILARATION AND PEACE THAT I NEVER WANTED IT TO END.**





launched a third business in the Middle East with two business partners. I am still a trustee at the secondary school. I've become a writer and podcaster and have been nominated as a global influencer in business, entrepreneurship and mindset/mental health.

#### What is your favourite quote?

My mother sent me this quote which she'd found in a book. She's an important sounding board in my life and has been a space of unconditional love and support at times when I've asked: what it is that makes me reach for more and why I can't be happy settling for things as they are; like everyone else seems to be able to? This quote encapsulates the heart of everything that these conversations have been about:

**"THE INDIVIDUAL HAS ALWAYS HAD TO STRUGGLE TO KEEP FROM BEING OVERWHELMED BY THE TRIBE.**

**IF YOU TRY IT, YOU WILL BE LONELY OFTEN, AND SOMETIMES FRIGHTENED. BUT NO PRICE IS TOO HIGH TO PAY FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF OWNING YOURSELF."**

**RUDYARD KIPLING**

#### What is a challenge that you've recently managed to overcome?

In 2019 I climbed Mount Snowdon to [raise funds for a local school](#). At 1,085 meters it's the highest mountain in England and Wales. It's also one of the hardest things I've ever done. I'd never climbed a mountain before, but I was 50 that August. I was reinventing my life in other areas, so it seemed like a good idea back in April to say yes. Now I can add mountain-climber to my list of lofty achievements. But saying that does not really encapsulate what I went through. It was tough. The higher we got the more dizzy and nauseous I felt, the other 12 in the group were getting further and further ahead and one of our guides was trying to coax me step by agonising step to the summit. When I finally got there, it took sitting for 30 minutes to

even recover enough strength to look up and walk around enjoying the view.

I've never been more proud of myself, more grateful for the expertise and care of those guides and the support of my fellow climbers.

#### What advice would you give to a new entrepreneur setting up their first business?

I know personally how important it is to master whatever the game in your own life is. It's scary and thrilling, full of both possibility and pitfalls as you take your first steps on this new road you've set out for yourself. There are days where the pushing and shoving, the blind faith that you are on the right path, yields little result. On others, it's like the universe has thrown open its coffers to shower you with everything you could wish for. I have no idea where I'll be sitting this time next year and that's actually part of the fun. But right now, I've never been more certain that this who and where I'm meant to be.

#### What change would you like to see in the world of work and business?

I look at the girls at the school where I'm a governor and often think how are we equipping our next generation to thrive-to be resilient, resourceful and responsible-in the world all of us are creating? What choices will they make to bring success and fulfilment into their lives? So much has changed for me-it's not always rosy (and sometimes it just sucks!) but there's no longer a need to balance work and life, it's about creating the harmony, the what works, the how can I be my best everywhere and deliver what I promise to do and be in all areas of my life? Big questions...and the answers keep changing.

#### Do you have a "business pet peeve"?

No shows and lateness really irritate me. It's so hugely disrespectful of other people's time and for me speaks volumes about how people operate. I will stop spending time with people who have this habit.

#### Where can people find you?

[My website](#) has all the important information.

# HOW TO STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE TO CREATE LIFE ON YOUR TERMS

**As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the opportunity to speak to international career coach, speaker and all-around Bajan Badass, Makeda Alleyne.**

*By Mags Thomson*

With 15 years of experience in the training, learning and development sector, Makeda Alleyne has worked with world-leading companies and global brands to design and deliver professional development programmes. Today, through her company Makeda Alleyne Programmes Ltd., she works with professional women who feel stuck and desperately unhappy in their jobs and careers and are absolutely dying to make a change.

We met on LinkedIn and bonded over our mutual love of RuPaul's Drag Race and Makeda's positively contagious smile and energy! Through her coaching and mentoring programming Makeda works to dramatically increase her client's perception of what's possible for them, what they're capable of and what they freaking deserve. This allows them to stop settling and playing small in jobs that no longer serve them, and **finally** go after the deliciously aligned life and career they crave!

**How did you get here? What inspired your business?**

I grew up in a country and household where success and achievement were wildly celebrated. So from a very young age, I made this dangerous link between my success and my self-worth. As a super-high achiever, I took that mindset with me to my academic years which got me loads of accolades and scholarships and then I took it with me straight into my professional career.

Then one day, I found myself in a job that looked so great on paper (hello nice salary and ego-boosting job title), but the problem was, despite all my "success", I was massively unhappy and miserable.

So unhappy in fact, that I burnt out and totally fell apart,

MAKEDA ALLEYNE - CAREER COACH

getting sent home from work for five weeks with severe stress, anxiety and depression.

After I recovered and handed in my notice, it made me rethink a whole host of things.

Who am I away from my job?

What does success mean to be at this stage of my life?

What do I want my life to look like going forward?

How do I need to grow and develop in order to be brave enough to actually make that happen?

As I went through my life-altering transformation in finding myself and going after what I want, I realised that this is **exactly** what I want to empower other women to do.

To stop settling in a job that leaves you feeling unhappy, unfulfilled, uninspired and empty, and instead transform into the type of woman who unapologetically owns, stands up for and goes after the type of life and career you so desperately want. Because you freaking deserve it!

**What is a challenge that you've recently managed to overcome?**

In March 2021 I set myself a challenge to deliberately do a number of things that made me feel super uncomfortable, scared and totally cringy. I'm talking about things like:

- Starting dating again (hello Bumble!)
- Using a full-body pic on my dating profile.
- Having a difficult conversation with my family.
- Increasing the price of my coaching.
- Dancing during a Zoom workshop in nothing but my underwear.
- Dancing naked in the mirror every morning.
- Doing 5 videos in 5 days on LinkedIn.
- Showing up on camera in my glasses with zero makeup.
- Having tough conversations about finances.





## AS I WENT THROUGH MY LIFE-ALTERING TRANSFORMATION IN FINDING MYSELF AND GOING AFTER WHAT I WANT, I REALISED THAT THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I WANT TO EMPOWER OTHER WOMEN TO DO.

Most of these things have absolutely **nothing** to do with my career, but absolutely **everything** to do with my transformation.

You see I'm **deliberately** stretching myself and increasing my tolerance for discomfort because that's **precisely** what it takes to become the type of woman who-instead of procrastinating or totally shutting down when shit gets uncomfortable-**unapologetically** stands in her power and trusts herself to **bravely** go after what she wants!

Then **that's** the mindset and energy you use to finally transform your career and your life! The solution isn't in doing even more research, attending another webinar or asking friends for advice. The solution is in **massively** increasing your tolerance for discomfort so that you also **massively** increase what you feel capable of achieving! The solution...is in you!

### As you grew the business, what have you learned about leadership?

My biggest lesson about leadership is all about authenticity. When I first started I was very caught up in wanting to be viewed as "professional". I wanted to be taken seriously, be seen as an expert and get things "just right". If you were to find some of the first videos I ever did... Actually, strike that. Please don't find them!

What I learned is that my authenticity is what makes me unique and is the very thing that attracts my soul-aligned people to me. People talk about authenticity, but what so many forget is that it's a choice. A deliberate choice that takes courage!

And as I learned to love and accept myself exactly as I am, I felt more empowered to show up as the authentic Makeda who has shitloads of energy, struggles, makes mistakes, swears sometimes and is 100% faith fuelled.

That's me.

And as we say in Barbados "you can like it or lump it". My days of twisting to fit into a mould of who

I'm "supposed" to be are long gone! And I know that by choosing to be authentically myself, I also empower other women to do the same.

What change would you like to see in the world of work and business?

I couldn't say this any louder if I tried:

### **I REBUKE THE HUSTLE MENTALITY!!**

I rebuke the idea that you need to work 37 hours a day, to the point of exhaustion in order to be successful.

No please, no ma'am.

Been there, done that, bought the t-shirt, didn't fit!!

Do I believe that there are some times when you need to put your head down and get on with it? Of course.

But you don't have to go through life absolutely exhausted and broken. And you don't get brownie points for constantly being busy.

I would absolutely love to see a shift to more aligned action, and an openness to the belief that you can choose ease over struggle and **still** see amazing, I mean a-ma-zing results.

### How do you feel about diversity and collaboration in business?

As a black woman, I can't stress just how important diversity is in every single part of business. It needs to be more than just a black square photo or little Instagram quote on International Women's Day or during Black History Month. It needs to be a conscious decision made by leadership to improve diversity and inclusion at every stage of the business.

And if you don't know how, there are absolutely amazing DEI practitioners who you can hire to show you the way.

### How do you define success?

My definition of success has drastically changed over the last five years. It truly started when I got absolute clarity on the vision for my life. Not my career, but my **life!**

I can't stress just how game-changing it is to have your own personal vision that goes way beyond goals, but instead powerfully articulates what you want your life to look like, what's most important to you and **why!** So my definition of success is living a life that moves me closer towards my vision, in a way that feels beautifully aligned with my personal values.

And the absolutely brilliant thing is that I'm defining success on my own damn terms. Result.

### Where can people find you?

The absolutely quickest way to connect with me is on [LinkedIn](#). You can also follow me on Instagram and email me at [hello@makedaalleyne.com](mailto:hello@makedaalleyne.com)

Reach out to find out about my 1:1 coaching programme for professional women who not only want to transform their career but how they show up for themselves in life in general.



# 5 Reasons Every Entrepreneur Should Write a Book – Now

**You may ask me, “Mags, there are so many books out there. Why should I bother?” and that is exactly the question I will answer for you today. Because there are many ways that a book will transform your business, and it isn’t the passive income of potential book sales.**

*By Mags Thomson*

The lack of a business book is probably not the lack of wanting to write. The statistic that’s usually quoted is that around 85% of people want to write and anywhere between 1% and 5% actually making it happen.

Statistics about wishful thinking aside, I am here to say that if you are an entrepreneur and want to grow your business, you need to write a book. Like, right now.

Publishing a book will transform your business in countless ways, but mostly it will do a lot of heavy lifting for you.

## #1 - Become The Go-To Authority

The most important reason to write a book is to establish yourself as an authority because this is the point that will impact all the others I will discuss here today.

As Kyle Eschenroeder puts it, a book is a declaration that you’re here to lead. You are letting the world know that you have something to say, and you are saying it. This is the best way to get people to listen, pay attention, and establish you as the go-to person on this topic. Even people who haven’t read your book, just by knowing you have written a book on



the topic, they understand you have a wealth of knowledge about this topic. Why else would you have sat down and written about it?

So, your book is not what makes you an authority. It is simply evidence of your authority. This doesn’t just lift your personal profile. It also boosts your business’s brand. Especially as a Single Person Enterprise, you are your brand and your brand is you. So, if you are the go-to person, that makes your business the go-to provider.

## #2 - Boost Your Marketing Endeavors

Your book will make you more visible online, and that is without the marketing campaign you will execute around your book launch. However, creating content around your book is obviously a great asset to your marketing campaign. But there are more benefits that you may not have considered.

Your listing on Amazon, your author profile there, and in places like Good Reads with link-backs to your website will improve your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) scores. This means that your

website, which sells your services and products, will be listed higher on Google searches, making it more likely people will find and trust your business.

On top of your content marketing, the book can create an amazing funnel for your email list. By giving away a free copy or sample, you can build your email list. This means that you can communicate with them about your offerings, but there is an added benefit, which we will discuss next.



### #3 - Increase Your Visibility

Having a book out there is going to help you connect to a whole new arena of people. You will be able to get on podcasts, write guest blogs, land interviews, and other forms of publicity that you haven't even thought of yet.

Your growing authority, larger reach, and your audience will combine to get you noticed by larger platforms and meet the criteria for greater collaborative opportunities. This will then help you grow your audience, reach, and authority even further, and thus this effect becomes accumulative.

**BY BECOMING AN AUTHOR, YOU WILL POSITION YOURSELF AS AN AUTHORITY IN THE EYES OF YOUR CLIENTS AND YOUR PEERS.**

— MARTIN JONES

### #4 - Create A Human Connection

There is no better way to build trust with your potential clients than to connect with them on a personal level. Your book is the ideal vehicle for that. You get to share your story, your personality, your sense of humor ... I could go on. These are the stories that people will remember and possibly even share with their friends looking for just the kind of coach, consultant, or small business they need.

### #5 - Make More Money

Your self-published book may make you some money, but it may also cost you money. That is, you need to invest in an editor, a designer for the cover art, and you may need some help with the specific marketing of your book. Hiring these professionals will cost you, but they will help you put out a good book. And it is important that the book you put out meets the standards you want people to associate with your business; how else will it compel your readers to buy from you?

Because this is where your book can make you the money, the credentials of being an author, the brand authority, your increased visibility, and the leads that your book can generate all help you find more clients. And they also mean you can start increasing your fees as a highly sought-after coach or consultant.

So, your book may not be the passive income gold mine some people tell you it is, but it will absolutely help you make more money in your business.

#### Some Added Benefits

- Increase your chances of a "traditional" book deal. Publishers are much more likely to consider working with you if you already have experience and a readership.
- Books are a great way to leverage word of mouth. People lend and recommend each other books they have found useful and inspirational.
- Working with an editor (which I highly recommend) will improve your writing skills, helping your business and marketing all around.



# HOW HAVING A DIVERSITY STRATEGY WILL INCREASE YOUR SLICE OF THE MARKET SHARE

**As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the pleasure to speak to queer, nonbinary, neurodiverse, poly business owner, and my new friend, G Sabini-Roberts.**

*By Mags Thomson*

As a queer, nonbinary (they/them pronouns if you please) neurodiverse, poly business owner with decades of the design industry and activism experience-and zero filter-it won't come as a surprise that G had plenty to say, and that we got on like a house on fire. They don't mince words and don't hold back. This can be both entertaining and -trust me-illuminating.

G has been in branding for 25 years and running their own brand design business for the last 9 of them. Their wife joined them in the business in 2019 and they're supported by a small team now.

Last year, in response to the amount of feedback they were getting on their personal content around issues of LGBTQ+ inclusivity, particularly gender diversity, they-together with their partners-set up [The Queer Box](#) to deliver LGBTQ+ Diversity training to small business owners.

**How did you get here? What inspired your business?**

The branding business started because I needed to be able to work around having a young family and I had the skills. It was nothing more complex than that. However, I've grown to develop a very particular approach over the years that is intensely client-centric, collaborative and a ton of fun. And it gets brilliant results, which has helped everything grow.

But that's the bread and butter. Since making the choice to be deliberately open and vulnerable about my own experiences of being nonbinary and neurodiverse so many more opportunities have opened up. Whether it be curating spaces, creating resources or offering mentorship, supporting people who want to learn about these issues...it is allowing me to take an active role in shaping a future that I believe will be better for all of us.

**Equality, justice and respect for every human as a complete and valid person have been drivers in pretty much all my life choices.**

## How do you hope your work will impact the world?

The tide is turning. Diversity and inclusion are no longer on the outer edges of what matters in business. The evidence is there: businesses that are openly inclusive and who take a position of leadership in these issues are, year on year, increasing their slice of the market share.

As humans, we are waking up to the fact that the way things have always been done is not always the best way - or even a positive way. We can do better. We are starting to do better. We now need to keep building that momentum.

## What sets you apart from other people in your field?

On the brand design side, my approach is different to most. I use my autistic powers of intense focus, attention to detail and obsessive enthusiasm for every client and we design their brand on the spot, together, usually in a day or less. Having been doing this for a long time means that it all happens very easily and efficiently - not to mention it always gets beautiful and deeply personally meaningful results.

When it comes to inclusion I have been on the outside my whole life, but I don't see that as a negative. I think it's an aspect of being autistic that causes me to simply not see the divisions that some others so easily use to separate groups. I love getting to share that in thoughtful, challenging yet non-confrontational ways that inspire deeper thought and personal reflection.

## How has your (mental) health impacted your business?

I'm blessed with fairly robust mental health. However, my neurodiversity does present multiple challenges. One of the joys of entrepreneurship has been having the opportunity to build businesses that work for me, on my terms, and I encourage that in my clients too.

Reaching the point where I was able to start recruiting a team to help take on the aspects of the business that I find challenging has been revolutionary.

## How do diversity and inclusivity play a part in your business?

It is my business - quite literally. It is my life. I accidentally became an activist at the age of 17 when I asked the headteacher of my 6th form if I could set up an LGBT group in the college, and I was told in no uncertain terms that I could not - thanks to Section 28.\* So I trained as a volunteer at the local women's centre and set one up off campus instead.

Equality, justice and respect for every human as a complete and valid person have been drivers in pretty much all my life choices. I'm not afraid to be the one to draw a line in the sand if no-one else has stood up yet but increasingly I am one of many. In my own lifetime, I have gone from not even having basic equal rights to being able to marry the person I love regardless of our genders, raise a legally recognised family and see my children grow up in a world that is many, many times more accepting than the one I grew up in.

## FEM is the Feminist Entrepreneurs Magazine. How would you define feminism in your life and business?

I was raised by feminist parents. I remember being taken to the Pankhurst Centre in Manchester as a youngster and being told the stories of the women that fought to give women the right to vote.

My aunt was an investigative journalist who dedicated her life to exposing inequalities and fighting for justice - and as a trans woman in the 80s and 90s, that was almost unheard of.

I have many diversities as a human - as we all do. Understanding their intersections has to be at the core of where we are moving towards as a society. We certainly need to get a grip of the exclusionary, defensive reactions that some diverse groups have against others.



Oppression is not a competition and there is space for all of us.

Helping people to understand that - in both business and in life - is central to who I am and who I choose to be in the world.

## Where can people find you?

People who would like to know more about me can check out my [personal website](#). For information about my brand design business, check out [Branding by G](#). And for those who are interested in making their business more inclusive and diverse, check out [the Queer-Friendly Business Course](#).

Of course, you can follow me on all the socials:

[Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

**We certainly need to get a grip of the exclusionary, defensive reactions that some diverse groups have against others. Oppression is not a competition and there is space for all of us.**

*\*Section 28 was a law passed in 1988 by a Conservative government that stopped councils and schools "promoting the teaching of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship." The law was stopped in Scotland in 2000 and in the rest of the United Kingdom in 2003*

(Source: [bbc.co.uk](#))

# IS EMBRACING BRILLIANCE THE HUSTLE ANTIDOTE?

As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the opportunity to speak to the founder of Changemaker Content, creator of the Brilliance Ignition Process, and author of Brilliance Unboxed, Jo Gifford!

By Mags Thomson

Jo Gifford is an entrepreneur, podcaster, Founder of Changemaker Content, creator of the Brilliance Ignition process, author of Brilliance Unboxed, and content development strategist and consultant for change-makers. I have been a fan of hers for ages. In fact, back in 2005, her 'Blogging for Business' course was the first-ever investment I made in my entrepreneurial development.

Jo's soul passion and purpose is to create connections and conversations with unboxed leaders who use their brilliance to create change. She believes in building legacies, movements and missions that are designed to make a difference. You understand why I was so excited she agreed to be part of FEM, because in her own words:

**We can truly change the world one word, one thought and one connection at a time.**

**I know you carry a Wonder Woman mug around, but tell us a little of your own origins story?**

I'm from Cambridgeshire, and I began my career as a graphic designer. I lived in London for some time with my graphic design career, where I undertook my studies for my Master's in Design Management. I then went freelance and self-employed 15 years ago, and have always had a portfolio career of teaching, writing for all kinds of media, and design. All of these experiences now inform how I approach content and creative thinking with my clients.

I'm a mum of twins who are 11 (almost 12) and I work and thrive alongside a handful of chronic illnesses-endometriosis, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia.

I have redesigned my life to make my business and the way that I work, work for me.

### What are you working on right now?

I'm recording my book, *Brilliance Unboxed*, for an audiobook. I'm planning episodes for my new radio show, creating my podcast, and working on some done-for-you content packages for my change-makers. Lots of wonderful things to send into the world soon.

### How has your (mental) health impacted your business?

Mental Health has impacted my business by being something that I need to take particular care of and pay attention to, particularly over the most difficult times like the last year. In 2020 I experienced a great deal of grief losing my father to dementia and COVID, and losing a lot of other family members over the year. It really impacted my mental health hugely.

I am fortunate that I've created my business to be flexible and to be something that can exist and can run without me being at the helm full time. Being able to run my business and to do what I do flexibly with the team around me, has always been really important while dealing with health challenges and motherhood alike.

I've always been really open and honest about my physical and mental health, and I've discovered that people find that something they are really drawn to. My honesty and vulnerability create a human connection - because we are all human, after all.

### What is your greatest motivation for running your business?

The greatest motivation for running my business is to create a brilliant life and financial freedom for me and my family, and to create an impact in the world, to help people share their voice and help people to create change.

I know that content is such an amazing tool to do that. Whether it's a conversation, social media posts, a magazine just like this, or anything else, we can create change through words.

### How would you define feminism in your life and business?

Feminism really shows up in my home life. We don't have traditional roles at all at home, my partner and I are a team. It's really important to me to model to my girls that women can have authority in their lives, that they can work in a way that works for them. I'm passionate about enabling women to use their voice to share their truth and create impact through that.

### Do you have a "business pet peeve" that you come across often on social media etc.?

A business pet peeve that I often see is the hustle and the very masculine, "bro marketing" edge that is applied to content. I'm much more about harnessing your energy, working with your creative cycles and making an impact in a way that works for you rather than forcing it.

### Where can people find you?

You can find me on [Instagram @thejogifford](https://www.instagram.com/thejogifford) or on my website [www.jogifford.co](http://www.jogifford.co). My book, *Brilliance Unboxed* is available online, and my podcast, *The Human Connection Experience*, is available on Spotify, iTunes, and Stitcher Radio.

**I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT ENABLING WOMEN TO USE THEIR VOICE TO SHARE THEIR TRUTH AND CREATE IMPACT THROUGH THAT.**



# How to Slay Impostor Syndrome and Build Your Dream Business

As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the opportunity to speak to coach, podcaster and all-round rebel rouser, Meg Kissack of The Rebel Rousers.

By Mags Thomson

Meg is an absolute firecracker and one of the funnest people I have met in a while! Based in Liverpool, UK, she is the founder of The Rebel Rousers, and host of The Daily Pep! Podcast and The Couragemakers Podcast. She's a coach, podcaster and all-round rebel rouser for fiercely creative, wildly multi-passionate & fabulously unconventional women, who want to get out of their own way and make shit happen.

Meg helps her clients show up in the world as their most courageous and authentic selves, do the epic shit only they can do and make the world a brighter place. She believes that everything changes when you believe you matter.

**We'd love to know a little of your origins story. How did you get to where you are?**

There are two things I've always been - someone who wants to make the world a brighter place, and an outsider. I've always dressed loudly, laughed loudly and had things to say. School isn't the best place for people who don't fit it. When I was 18, I became completely entrenched in the world of feminist activism. It was my dream to work for a women's charity and I ended up working in a professional capacity to end violence against women.

While I had what I thought would be my dream job, I was throwing myself 100% into my work and not leaving much else for me. I struggled with my mental health and ended up burning

out. It was then that I started to explore if there was a way of doing work that made a difference but also lit me up. I started The Rebel Rousers (originally That Hummingbird Life) as a self-care blog for women in helping roles, and it has organically grown into a place that encourages women to find and do the things only **they** can do which make the world a brighter place and fulfils them at the same time.

### What is a challenge that you have recently overcome?

I've recently learned how to stop taking things personally when it comes to business, rather than beating myself up. I used to try something, it wouldn't work, and rather than exploring what could be improved or why it wasn't working, I'd quickly fall into a rabbit hole of blame, shame and believing that it would never work.

During the past year, I've really been embracing a mindset of experimentation. I've used my creativity for good and started to get curious about what works and what doesn't. I started to really embrace the fact that not everything will work and that's not a direct reflection of my worth

**I WANT TO HAVE SOME PART IN LEADING A GENERATION OF WOMEN WHO ARE PROUD OF WHO THEY ARE, ARE HERE TO LAY THEIR STAKE IN THE GROUND, WHO DON'T FEEL THEY NEED TO APOLOGISE FOR EXISTING AND WHO OWN THEIR STORIES, LIVE THEIR STORIES AND SHARE THEIR STORIES.**

as a human being. We all know this intellectually, but it's so hard to tell ourselves otherwise, sometimes. I've also really leaned into doing business my way and actually enjoying business rather than resisting it, which is what I did for so long!

### How do you hope your work will impact the world?

I hope my work will help to create a world of colourful, rebellious, creative and fabulous women who are owning their gifts, finding and following their unconventional callings and making the world a brighter place through the things they are uniquely equipped to do.

We don't have to look very far back into history to see that women doing things differently have been ostracized. But I'm excited. I want to have some part in leading a generation of women who are proud of who they are, are here to lay their stake in the ground, who don't feel they need to apologise for existing and who own their stories, live their stories and share their stories.

### How has your (mental) health impacted your business?

I've struggled with anxiety, depression and OCD since I was a child, but I think I have only started to take my mental health seriously since I started running my own business as it coincided with a big burnout, and a realisation that not prioritising myself just wasn't working.

My mental health means I have to at least try to be more compassionate with myself, listen to my energy levels, and give myself a break when I need to. It looks like having flexible working hours, saying no when I need to, remembering that some days are going to be a write-off and learning to be okay with that. Sometimes, I forget all of this and go down that rabbit hole of blame and shame! But it's the climbing back out of it that counts.

### What is your greatest motivation for running your business?

I see too many brilliant and fabulously creative women with huge dreams talk themselves out of doing the work they were meant to do. Work that will have a huge impact on the world and has the capacity to really change things.

I want to amplify the tiny voice that timidly



wonders if they can do it and encourage them to be their own rebel rouser instead of their very own personal dreamshitter.

I believe the world will be a fundamentally better place if women believe they have something to say, have the courage to put themselves out there and share their gifts with the world.

### Do you have a "business pet peeve" that you come across often?

So many! I'm sick of the toxic positivity we see everywhere; I think it's one thing seeing the world with a glass half full, but I think it's dangerous to pressure people to be positive all the time because that simply isn't reality and it's completely unsustainable.

I'm also sick of the focus on outcomes rather than showing up. I wish we could have a more nuanced conversation about building businesses, and look at all the years that come before an 'overnight success' rather than all the selling

we see around building a 6 figure business overnight. It's misinformation, it's deceiving, it's demoralising if you're just getting started and you believe in the hype (because it's sometimes very convincing) and it masks the amount of work and time it takes, and the power of showing up, again and again.

### Where can people find you?

My online home is [therebelrousers.com](http://therebelrousers.com) and you can listen to [The Daily Pep!](#) every Monday-Friday morning. It's a short, sassy and snappy podcast designed to start your day off with a compassionate bang and help you keep going. I sometimes hang out on [Instagram](#). I also have a group coaching programme called [One Woman Band](#). It's an online group coaching programme for creative and multi-passionate women who are sick of putting their plans onto the Someday Pile and are ready to get out of their own way, get shit done and create the life they love with a shit-tonne of support and accountability.

HOUSE OF HIVES PRESENTS

# THE POWER OF REINVENTION

**PERSONAL STORIES OF HOW OUR GREATEST CHALLENGES BECOME THE CATALYST TO REINVENT OUR LIFE!**



## The Letter On The Kitchen Table

A CHAPTER FROM THE POWER OF REINVENTION\*

**Everything changed after we moved. The move in itself felt liberating; going to a new city. It felt like the fresh start we needed. We had been struggling for a long time, and had ended up living in my childhood home. Finally, I was working again, and we managed to get ourselves a flat. It was tiny, but it was ours. And not a moment too soon. I think another couple of weeks under my parents' roof would have meant the end of our relationship.**

*By Mags Thomson*

I think it was about a month after we moved. I was at work and Martin\*\* worked from home. He had turned on the news to see that a gruesome murder had been committed. The victim had

been chopped up, and various body parts were delivered to different government buildings. The murderer turned out to be the victim's lover. He suffered from narcissistic personality disorder, the news anchor reported. All Martin thought, he told me later, as he looked at the murder's mug shot was: wow, that expression is just like my mother-in-law's signature smirk.

When I came home from the office, Martin called me to his computer. "Mags, you need to read this," he said. "I have found your parents' handbook."

That evening my life changed forever, and for the better. I started reading what Martin has forever since called the handbook.

Upon seeing the facial expression of that



killer and hearing the term narcissist, Martin had turned to the internet. A quick search had turned up numerous results on the term. As he started reading, he began to recognise my mother in the behaviours described. It explained so many of the crazy things that had happened to us. That first night researching narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) was mind-blowing. I am not saying that I am in any way licensed to diagnose anyone, but I became pretty certain that my mother does indeed have a disordered personality. Every list of behavioural traits of narcissists is a description of my upbringing and family.

That evening was the turning point; this is where the journey to the biggest decision of my life truly began. But before I tell you about it, let's explore how here in the first place.

Two things happened around the time of finding the handbook that solidified my resolve to make that big decision. The first incident had happened a few days after the big move, and had come from my father. As you all know, moving is stressful and quite a bit of work. I had decided not to take time off from my new job, so it was extra busy and stressful. Besides, we had just lived with my parents for a year, so Martin and I were enjoying our privacy and freedom. It was 10 days after we moved out that I received an email from my father. "Do you remember the story of the prodigal son\*\*\*," he asked. "If you can imagine how his parents must have felt, you can imagine how your mother and I are feeling right now." I had been emailing with my parents because I still had to go back to tidy some things away, give our rooms a good clean out etc. So I may not have been sharing a lot and not have been super quick in replying, but they knew I was okay. They had seen me a little over a week ago, and would see me again shortly. So, was there really a reason for this biblical guilt trip?

The second incident involved my mother. This was a few days after Martin found the handbook. I was very sick. The sickest I have been in my life. I had spent a night on the bathroom floor, and had a massive fever. Martin had spent most of the night spraying me with water to cool me down, and had (more than once) considered

calling an ambulance. Although the fever had broken, I was still feeling very faint, dehydrated, and my throat was lined with razor blades after 12 hours of acid treatment. Needless to say, I was off work and in bed. When my phone rang, I was in the bathroom, but I called my mother back within a few minutes. Now, my vocal cords were shot and I could barely speak, so there was no hiding the fact that I was unwell.

"Why did you not answer your phone?" my mother demanded. I explained I had been in the bathroom. After being further berated for not answering the initial call, she went on to talk about nothing specific. There had been no emergency that would have explained her urgency or her concern about not getting through. I know that I am looking for justifications, but there really was no reason for her responses. Even when such excuses are only explanations, not justifications of bad behavior. Besides, the only reason I was able to get back to her so quickly was because I had been ill and in the house. Although my work would have allowed me to answer the call if there was time, on a normal day I could have been in a meeting or simply too busy for personal calls.

These two incidents showed me that both my parents laid an unhealthy claim on me. While reading through the handbook, I continued remembering more and more examples that fit the profile.

So, let me take you back a little and tell you why Martin and I had lived with my parents in the first place.

In 2010, both Martin and I found ourselves without jobs. I had ended my employment with a toxic boss in court and Martin had been struggling to find a job in the midst of a global economic crisis. We wanted to move back to the UK, where Martin is from. We felt our prospects might be better. So we listed the house for sale, packed the necessary belongings and headed out. My eldest sister in the meanwhile had agreed to rent our home while it was on the market, so that would cover at least some of the mortgage payments. She had sold her house and was living with my parents after finding a job in their area. However, she wasn't sure she wanted to stay in that job, and investing in her

own place was a bit of a gamble. We figured this would be a way for her to have her own place, while we didn't have to cover both a full rent in the UK and a full mortgage in the Netherlands. Win-win.

My sister was supposed to move in a few weeks after we left. Week after week passed though, without her moving in, or any of the rent payments making it into our bank account. There was always some reason why she couldn't move, why it wasn't convenient etc. After about six months in the UK, we decided to pull the plug before completely running out of money. Before we could even complain or question her motives, all the back rent appeared in our accounts shortly after arriving back to the Netherlands.

Through the sisterly gossip network I later learned that she had been against us moving to the UK, calling it the "biggest mistake of our lives" and she "wasn't going to contribute to it in any way". Of course, we had calculated her rent payments into our plan, and withholding them ultimately allowed her to sabotage what she judged to be the greatest mistake of our lives. Whether or not it was or would have been was not really up to her though, was it?

Anyway, back in the Netherlands, Martin and I went back to the job hunt with renewed vigor. We were still struggling to make the mortgage payments and we really wanted to avoid foreclosure. Plus, we figured selling the house would increase our chances of finding jobs, since we would no longer be tied to the area. My parents were very much against us still pursuing the sale and tried to talk us out of it. We persisted and miraculously agreed on a sale within a week of the house being relisted.

In the meantime, (it takes a few months here to go from agreed sale to exchange of keys) we were still struggling to make our payments. My parents decided they would help, by offering Martin "a job". They turned into horrific bosses and even started calling Martin, who was 29 at the time, "boy" right to his face (as in, "you are late, boy!"). Things kept getting progressively worse until Martin plain refused to go to their home by himself after catching my father sneaking up behind him with a brick in his hand (make of that what you will). Since Martin and I were supposed



Little Mags playing dress-up



Mags at her parents' wedding anniversary, age 2

to move in with my parents after the house would change ownership, I decided we needed to clear the air.

Communications had dwindled to a real low. My father in particular was pushing too many buttons to even begin counting. With days left until the move, my father suddenly insisted we have dinner with them every day while we live there, and said we would have to ask for permission with at least one days' notice if we didn't want to join for some reason. My parents and I have very different ideas about food though, and there was just no way I wanted them back in a position where they would

be controlling my diet. Well, my father insisted, if we didn't agree we would not be allowed to move in. Days before I was handing off the keys to our home, I was threatened to be made homeless if I did not comply. I kept my foot down though and once it became obvious I was not giving in on this one, the demand was dropped.

Still, it gives you an idea of how tense the situation had become. So, I arranged for my parents, Martin, and myself to sit down for a talk. This was my last ditch effort to find a better relationship with my parents. I laid it all on the table. "I don't feel that being myself is good enough for you guys. I don't

think you actually like me at all, let alone love me" I shared. My mother just stared at her hands in her lap.

No response.

No denial.

No emotion.

Meanwhile my dad was staring daggers at Martin. As if he wished Martin to drop dead on the spot.

More importantly, this is when I first articulated the consideration of breaking contact with my parents. "If you give me a choice now" I said "between having the relationship we have now, or none at all? I would choose the latter". Again, there was no response. And of course, nothing changed.

Over the years I made many attempts to sit down and reason with my parents. Especially once I reached my 20s, but perhaps even as a kid. When I was younger though, the frustration of the communicative stonewalling made me act out. It made me stubborn and rebellious. Behaviours that were always and repeatedly thrown back into my face as proof of my inadequate personality. People found me willful and interpreted my behaviour as spoiled. I just did not know how to behave; I felt trapped, misunderstood, and unhappy. At the same time, my frame of reference was only that of my toxic family dynamic, so I simultaneously didn't know how to escape and didn't know there was something to escape to.

When I was a teenager I often got into discussions with my mother. When she would get frustrated with my opposing opinion, she would scream at me to stop yelling at her. "Do not raise your voice at me!" she would yell. Even though she was the person who started screaming in the first place. I think she was showing her true frustration with my developing individuality and the first cracks in her control over me.

Anyway, there were a myriad of ways in which my parents would emphasise and repeat their negative messaging. You have to understand though that it wasn't just my "failures" or shortcomings that were evidence of my inadequacies. Even my talents were used against me. When, in my 20's, my mother and I were struggling to live together after I moved home for a while after university, I invited her to go out for a meal to discuss things,

which she declined because "my communicative skills were too strong". Thinking back now I suppose what she meant was that she couldn't pull the wool over my eyes so easily, but at the time I felt horrible. My own mother was afraid to talk to me because my verbal communication was too strong? I became scared to engage in reasoning with anyone because I didn't want to accidentally overpower them verbally. Just like that, I began fearing one of my greatest assets.

As I started processing memories like these, in the new found insight of learning about narcissistic personality disorder, my resolve and commitment to my own well-being strengthened. Just over a month after Martin's internet search, I went to my parents' home. I took everything I still had stored there, and left them a letter on the kitchen table.

"Dear mother and father,

Through the years we have noticed time and again that we have very different views on life. This has always led to conflict and lack of understanding. On numerous occasions we have tried to find solutions. Unfortunately we never have, and we continue to fall into old patterns of behaviour. It is for this reason I want to ask you not to contact me or Martin, and also I ask that you do not try to contact us through my sisters. I am sorry to say that I see this as my only option to escape this negative spiral and find a positive future. I thank you for your understanding and wish you nothing but happiness and positivity.

With all my heart,

Mags"

To many people cutting contact with my parents may seem extreme. To me, it was the only option left to me, and the only way to protect myself, Martin, and our future.

Emancipation was a big deal. It was the hardest and the best decision I have ever made. Over time I have grown stronger, and have become more confident in dealing with continued efforts to reestablish contact.

After leaving the letter, I had no illusions about the fact that my parents would actually let me be. They had never respected my boundaries, ever. So why would they start now. I was right. Within a few weeks I received a postcard from Indonesia, where my mother was travelling. It was just an

average vacation type card, about the weather and such notions. As if nothing happened, just completely ignoring the fact that I had requested no contact. Denial had always worked for her before, so perhaps she figured it would work this time as well.

About six months after I had emancipated myself from my parents, I visited my youngest sister for her birthday. While I was there the phone rang, and she left the room to take the call. "It was our parents wishing me happy birthday," she said when she returned. About 20 minutes later the doorbell rang. It was the exact time it would have taken my parents to get into the car and drive over to my sister's house. I just knew it was them, and my only way out was through that same door. I jumped up to grab my bag and shoes, so I could get out, but there was just no getting out without passing them.

My mother tried to hug me and of course pulled the victim card. Luckily, I had practised my response.

"Oh, I want to say hello to Mags!"

"Well, I don't want to say hello to you."

"That's right, you don't want to talk to me and I am not allowed to know why."

"I told you exactly why two years ago, I was just not important enough to listen to then."

I left the house fuming and waited for them to leave. Honestly, I should have just left. My sister had obviously set me up for the ambush. These

however, were lessons I still had to learn.

That was the last time I saw my parents, and as complicated as the journey has been, cutting them out of my life was the best possible thing I could have done for myself. It created the space for me to rediscover who I really am, without their manipulations and judgements. Through that journey I have become so much more aware of the stories I tell myself and how I speak to myself.

Of course, no personal story is completely objective. I will be the first to say that the way we tell our stories is highly subject to interpretation; who we were at the time our memories were made, and who we are now as we look back on them are vastly different. And this is without yet taking into consideration that each story is remembered differently by different people, due to the reality of perspective and perceived truth.

This is why it's so important that we tell our stories, and introduce each other to our lived experiences. I am sure that, were my mother to tell her story honestly and vulnerably, I would feel the heartache of her trauma and her inability to protect her children from suffering for her mental illness. It is through stories that we learn not just our own history, but also how we fit into the greater tapestry of the world. And more than that, it allows us to question the status quo, challenge it or find commonalities with people we felt were worlds apart. Stories define us as people and as humanity, and it's up to us to make it a story worth living.

*\* This is not the final edit of the chapter as will be included in the book.*

*\*\* I have changed my husband's name at his request.*

*\*\*\* The Parable of the Prodigal Son is a story from the Bible, where the younger of two brothers asks their father for his share in the inheritance. Upon being given the money he leaves his family to pursue a lavish life. When he runs out of money he returns to his family in destitute and shame. Expecting to have to beg his father for a servant's position in the household, he is welcomed back with open arms. My father, of course, referenced the part of the story where the son has left the family in his email to me, although I can't tell you what his expectations were regarding my destitute and shame.*



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# How Conscious Embodiment Will Uplevel Your Life and Business

**As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the opportunity to speak to mindset and self-mastery coach, Lydia Wilmsen.**

*By Mags Thomson*

Lydia was born and raised in Germany, and now travels the world as a free spirit, with a base in Cyprus, the Netherlands and Switzerland. I absolutely love listening to Lydia's podcast, and always feel inspired.

As a mindset and self-mastery coach, she helps successful entrepreneurs uncover the hidden mindset and emotional blocks that are holding them back from accelerating their results and breakthrough to new levels of ease, freedom, passion and purpose

**Are there experiences from your past that have informed what you do now?**

If anyone knows the programming-good and bad-of the mind, then it's me. I grew up in a cult-like setting, in surroundings of extreme control and learned to free myself from mind control and brainwashing. I rebuilt my life and personality from zero when I left at the age of 18.

Whilst graduating from school, studying geography and completing numerous coaching trainings, I have always kept myself busy with personal development in order to process my past.

That's how I became an expert on the human mind! I know how to consciously reprogramme oneself for success and abundance on all levels of life and business.

My experiences from the past have massively

informed the work I do today. I can only guide and support people in my non-judgmental, compassionate and yet strong and empowering way due to what I have been through and what I have transformed in my own life. People tell me their deepest and darkest secrets because they feel and know with every fibre of their being that they can trust me and are safe with me. My strength gives them the power to rise out of inner darkness and rebuild their lives.

**What are some of your daily practices to maintain your work-life balance?**

I live a quite free life and have created a business that gives me lots of free time. One of the many luxuries of my life. I spent quite some time on mindset and emotional work daily. Shifting a limiting belief doesn't happen through one intervention but through conscious consistent embodiment of new empowering thoughts. And this is the big challenge for so many out there, and the reason why they don't 'manifest' what they desire. They are not an energetic match to their desires, hence they don't become a physical reality.

Therefore, conscious embodiment through different methods and techniques is a daily practice for me. I do journaling (following my own unique process), I love to move my body, like dancing, sports, or yoga. And I still do self-coaching, energy work and emotional work on a daily basis. This has literally transformed my life. Those routines basically have saved my life and I make sure to clean up my thoughts, emotions and bodily tensions every single day. This is what I call self-mastery.

## As you grew the business, what have you learned about leadership?

When we think of leadership, we often think of leading others, a company, a team. Yet, first and foremost what is even more important is how we lead ourselves. If we are not able to lead ourselves properly, we will always be at the mercy of our own thoughts and emotions and act based on subconscious limiting beliefs and stories we tell ourselves. The more we lead ourselves into self-mastery (have to mention it again as it is so powerful), the more we can lead others from a place of love, connection, compassion, understanding, awareness and inner strength. Some things that most of today's leaders lack deeply and is missing dearly in our world.

## What change would you like to see in the world of work and business?

So many things to say here! For sure more female business owners stepping up their game and claiming their role as powerful change-makers alongside powerful men.

Furthermore, the group of highly sensitives, empaths and intuitives gaining more influence in our world of business, as they are the way-seers of a new paradigm on our earth. I am rooting for them to become conscious millionaires and billionaires, dreaming bigger than ever before!

If we want to survive as human species, we need powerful leaders who have mastered the energetic and the material realms alike! We need leaders who can bring body, mind **and** soul together.

## How do you define success?

Success in my eyes is very subjective. In the broadest sense, success to me is a well-lived life, whatever that means for someone personally. In my case, it consists of a rich life full of sensations (as a highly sensitive person I live with high sensory input on a daily basis), depth, personal development and growth, experiences, pleasure, freedom, connection and ease, just to name a few values of mine.

I think it is important that our idea of success

feeds our soul. Very often we seem to be strong and successful on the outside, while we are struggling so much to the point of almost breaking and being close to giving up on the inside. Working with these powerful people on raising their inner game is my deepest passion and witnessing people transforming their lives, their businesses and relationships after coming to me hopeless and helpless makes me so humble and grateful day after day.

My purpose in this life is to show people that they can rewrite their story, stop the fight with the enemy within and start a loving relationship that heals them from past pain. This helps them find and live their purpose while creating the life of their dreams. Now, that's what I call success!

**IF WE WANT TO SURVIVE AS HUMAN SPECIES, WE NEED POWERFUL LEADERS WHO HAVE MASTERED THE ENERGETIC AND THE MATERIAL REALMS ALIKE! WE NEED LEADERS WHO CAN BRING BODY, MIND AND SOUL TOGETHER.**

## What is your greatest motivation for running your business?

Some of my greatest motivators are my clients, for sure! The change I see in them. The transformation I witness regularly brings me to tears. One of the biggest joys of my life is a person breaking free from struggle and pain and shifting into deep inner peace, immense levels of freedom, wealth and pure joy.

Another motivator obviously is the fact that



I am my own boss. I follow my own rules. I have created a life of freedom, coming from the opposite direction-being raised in a cult, where individualism and freedom of the mind were destroyed constantly.

Last but not least, that I am honoured to be an inspiration for people who want to achieve the same for their lives. Or are looking for a piece of hope, that a different life is possible for them as well. I am happy and deeply grateful for every single human being I can inspire to not give up and keep going towards their dream.

## Where can people find you?

They can find me in my virtual home, [my website](#); in my Facebook Group '[Mindset Mastery for Successful Entrepreneurs](#)'; on [LinkedIn](#), and listen to my [Podcast](#).



Photo by SCScreative.nl

**NOW I DO MY BEST TO HOLD PEOPLE IN UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD AND COMMUNICATE MY BOUNDARIES AND NEEDS CLEARLY AND RESPECTFULLY.**

## HOW TO BECOME CONSCIOUSLY SELF-AWARE AND EMPOWER YOUR BUSINESS

**As part of the Inspiring Interviews Series, I had the opportunity to speak to transformational coach and recovering self-sufficient, overachieving, people pleaser, Emma Smillie.**

*By Mags Thomson*

Emma Smillie is a Scottish ex-pat and positively provocative transformational coach. She is also a recovering self-sufficient, overachieving, people pleaser. She lives in The Hague with her husband Drew and fur-baby Charlieboy the Havanese.

Emma is passionate about creating environments where people feel safe to be themselves, discover what they really want and become the creators of their lives. She does this in two ways; through her private practice and voluntary work as a transformational coach and with her passion project FloLab, a wellness-first shared workspace created for health-conscious entrepreneurs, freelancers and remote workers. She's on a mission to offer a workspace that highlights a holistic approach to professional life—one that supports your physical, mental, emotional & spiritual health.

## EMMA SMILLIE



Photo by Tara Shupe



Photo by SCScreative.nl

### Are there experiences from your past that have informed what you do now?

I'm originally from Edinburgh but moved away almost 5 years ago with my husband Drew's job. I've got such a varied background, originally training as a chef but being forced to quit that career when I triggered contact dermatitis on my hands and arms. I then stepped onto the bottom rung of the Health & Safety corporate ladder and after 10 years of climbing, I found a passion for learning & development, becoming a trainer in

that field.

There was always an underlying frustration for me in my corporate career, I hated being told what to do, when and where to do it. I seemed to spend most of my time either driving up and down the UK or being at home on my own compiling reports and doing data entry. When I moved into Learning & development, I loved being with people and sharing my knowledge but clocking in and out every day felt so restrictive. I dreamed of being my own boss and starting my own business. The

only problem was I didn't have strong enough self-belief to make that happen.

When we moved abroad, there was the opportunity I had been waiting for and I went for it! I worked relentlessly on my skills, self-belief, mindset and slowly started to love and accept the person I am today. The more time, space and effort I put into healing my physical and emotional body, the more I started to back myself and realise what I was capable of. Ultimately this effort led me to start a business in a foreign country where I don't speak the language and then complete my coach training during a pandemic. I'm super proud of myself for both of these things.

### What is your favourite quote?

It has got to be this one from Carl Jung:

**"UNTIL YOU MAKE THE SUBCONSCIOUS, CONSCIOUS IT WILL DIRECT YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL CALL IT FATE"**

This quote resonates deeply with why I do what I do. I believe it is so important that people do the work to become conscious of our assumptions, beliefs, biases and expectations which shape our reality, so we can create the life, and the world we really want to live in.

### What is a challenge that you've recently managed to overcome?

Navigating the uncertainty of 2020 and managing to keep my business (FloLab) open during this last year of pandemic lockdowns has felt like a big challenge. The biggest, most recent challenge for me was deciding whether to cut my losses and quit or to shift my mindset by choosing to focus on the potential growth of the coworking industry, expected to come in (the not too distant) post-pandemic times.

### How do you hope your work will impact the world?

In my work as a coach, facilitator and social entrepreneur I hope to help as many people as I can to create positive transformation in their lives. I believe the more conscious, self-aware and empowered we are as individuals the more chance we have as a collective to create a safer, healthier and fairer world for everyone to live and thrive in.

### What are some of your daily practices to maintain your work-life balance?

I have a neurodiverse brain, which means that I really struggle with consistency. I've tried every morning routine there is and been successful at some of them for a couple of months. Then I unceremoniously drop what's working and feel like a proper failure for not being able to stick to things.

What I find really works for me is to have slow mornings and a range of optional self-care, mindful practices that I can choose to do, rather than feel obligated to do because that is "what a business person should be doing to be successful". That's a bullsh\*t hustle and grind type social construct I recently unsubscribed from and I feel good about that.

My favourite things to do to set the best tone for my day range from listening to my favourite feel-good tunes and dancing around as I get ready, or it might be an online dance workout or yoga routine. It may even be staying in bed for an extra hour and reading or the ultimate self-indulgent luxury for me is having a bubble bath in the morning when most people are at work - what can I say, it's the strong rebel in me. I like to go against the grain!

### As you grew the business, what have you learned about leadership?

I've learned that leadership is not parenting or caregiving, which might sound weird but that's honestly how I showed up as a leader in the first year of my business FloLab. It's actually how I operated in the world for the majority of my life until I trained to be a coach and had a major a-ha moment as to why life often felt so heavy for me. I had the weight of the world on my shoulders, trying to be everything for everyone.

Leadership for me is about honesty, vulnerability and an unshakeable belief in people and their abilities. Now I do my best to hold people in unconditional positive regard and communicate my boundaries and needs clearly and respectfully.

### Where can people find you?

The best ways are to connect with me on [LinkedIn](#) or find out more about FloLab on the website: [www.flolabcollab.com](http://www.flolabcollab.com)

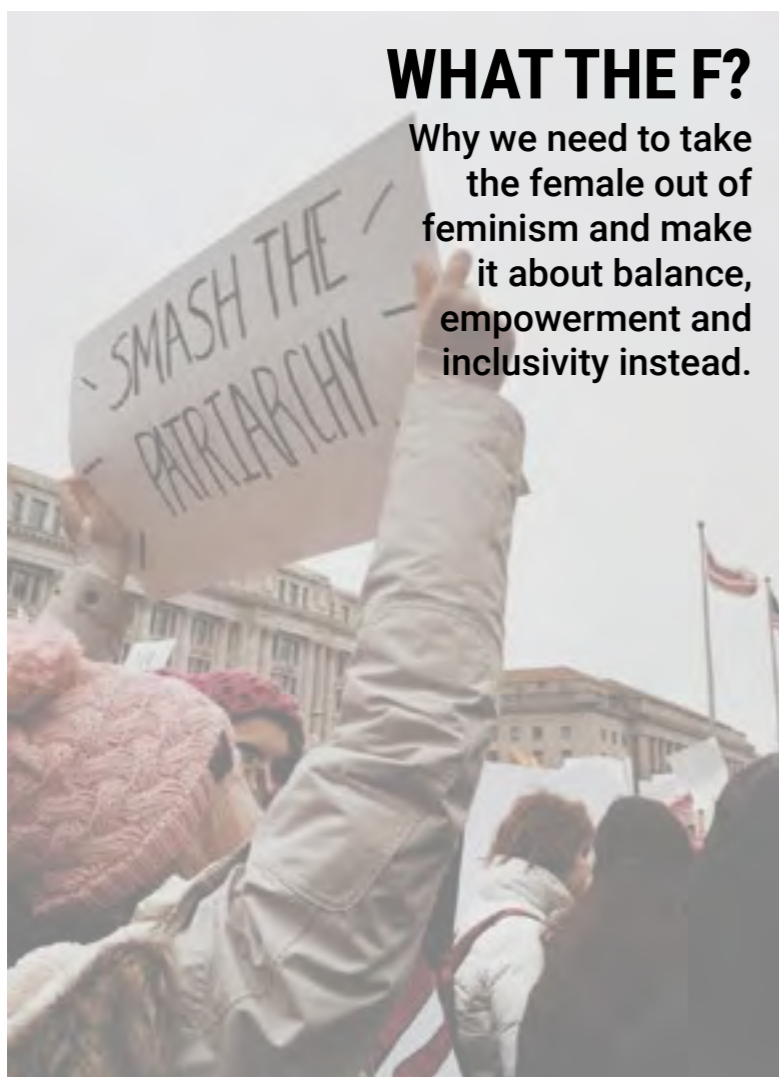
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### RESOURCES

#### **Being a Female Entrepreneur in a Masculine**

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