

WOMEN NEED EACH OTHER TO SHAPE FEMALE EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HOW TO HELP FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES EMPOWER THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

**CONQUER LIKE A GIRL CO-FOUNDERS MADDIE COSTA & TAMARA MOSBY:
RECLAIM YOUR GIRL
AND EMPOWER YOUR WOMANHOOD**

FEM 

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WELCOME.

Do you ever feel like you are just losing your mind? When you just cannot bend your brain in the way that the world is expecting, or may you are expecting it from yourself. You wonder if you are the only one who feels like this.

I will let you in on a secret. You are 100% not the only one who feels like this. It's just that we don't always talk about the situations and feelings that make us feel unsure, uncomfortable and vulnerable. So we put on a brave face and



we keep going. In doing so we miss the opportunity to connect with people who are feeling the same way. Or the opportunity to inspire other people that we all have days like this, and it's okay to feel a little wobbly sometimes.

Here is to all the women who decided it is time to give that inspiration to the people coming up behind them. The mentors, the leaders and the mothers who take us under their wings and say: I've been where you are, and you are going to be just fine!

Mags Thomson

Editor In Chief



WOMEN NEED EACH OTHER TO SHAPE FEMALE EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

If you are anything but a white man, you probably have experienced at times that this world is not made for you. Seatbelts are tested on male crash test dummies and are therefore less safe for women. Medicines are generally tested on men and are therefore less safe for women to use. We are seeing some shifts and improvements, but it is absolutely clear to me that the default setting in the world is still still 'Man'

By Mags Thomson

I've written before about the [specific challenges we meet as female entrepreneurs](#), and how this can make it tricky for women to successfully run their businesses. With almost half of women expressing a lack of mentors and advice as a reason for entrepreneurial struggles (according to [Inc.com](#)) and although women are often more successful in crowdfunding, access to traditional funding remains much harder.



Luckily, we're beginning to see more and more women talking about this experience, and finding ways to support each other too. I interacted with a LinkedIn post recently where a woman spoke to the experience of lacking mentorship and how frustrating it could be. Luckily a man decided to comment that it was insufficient to just speak to this lived experience without quoting the stats. And it's not that I have anything against stats or research, but sometimes it's completely sufficient to speak to our experience of the world. These stories and examples can help us all move forward in our efforts to shape a less biased world and possibly spark interest in research into Female Empowerment and Economic Development so that that lovely man on LinkedIn can get his stats.

Women Need Women to Uplift and Empower Each Other

I quoted that success in crowdfunding earlier, and I had my reasons. I think that women may be more successful in that particular strategy, because we are more focused on community and building connections, a focus that even seems to show up in our stress response.

"Although fight-or-flight may characterize the primary physiological responses to stress for both males and females, we propose that, behaviorally, females' responses are more marked by a pattern of "tend-and-befriend." Tending involves nurturant activities designed to protect the self and offspring that promote safety and reduce distress; befriending is the creation and maintenance of social networks that may aid in this process." (From [Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight](#))

I propose we embrace this as our superpower! Build and deepen those connections and rise by lifting each other.

A Celebration of Female Empowerment Squared

I have so many women to thank in my life, who empowered me and gave me the tools to pay that kindness forward. It's by paying it forward that we can grow Female Empowerment and Economic Development substantially. It's what I like to call Female Empowerment Squared, or empowered women empowering women to empower women. And let's make it very clear that when I say women, I really mean anyone who finds themselves marginalised by gender norms. I am using the binary for ease, and because I haven't figured out the literary alternative yet. If you have, please let me know (we're on a learning curve together, after all).

For me the revolution is not about denying the feminine and constantly trying to lean into our masculine traits more. It's about creating a space where we can be ourselves, and then growing that empowerment from there. And, as we learn to do this for ourselves, invite others to join us and grow our combined space. But, I went into that last time when I spoke about female entrepreneurs being leaders of the revolution. Today, I want to celebrate female empowerment squared by highlighting some experiences shared by mentors and mentees alike.

I hope you feel inspired by these examples of female empowerment in the world, to find a mentor or a mentee and inspire and support each other to create the change you'd like to see in the world.

Embracing Womanhood to Not Perpetuate a Toxic Paradigm

"Mentorship at its best can be one of the most significant relationships in your life, but it can also be very challenging as women (both as the mentee

and the mentor) when the conditions of our world are set to the masculine way of being and doing. I didn't appreciate my best female mentor as much at the time as I do retrospectively because as a young, very driven woman, watching her juggle her career and kids felt chaotic and unsafe. My desire was for someone unshakeable in their drive and performance. I didn't have patience for what felt like inconsistency and flakiness. It's only looking back that I realise she was modelling a healthy way of being highly successful in the world as a woman and mother, and exercising very important boundaries that apply to women in ways they rarely apply to men.

Now, as a mentor to many women around the world and a mother myself, I realise that when we expect women to show up like men, we're working against ourselves and other women, and the collective social and economic empowerment of all. When we show up that way, we're perpetuating a toxic paradigm that doesn't recognise the phases of every woman's month, nor the phases of her life. I passionately model and invite others into ways of being that work with the lived experience of womanhood. Instead of shaming women for waxing and waning, I celebrate and lean into supporting it, teaching women to embrace all that it is to be a woman in themselves and others. That's how we can all build better businesses and lives, by working together and seeing one another as completely whole and worthy in every phase. Having your true way of being fully validated, from within and without, is empowerment."

Dr Morgana McCabe Allan, CEO at Morgana McCabe Allan Ltd ([website](#) | [Facebook](#))



Hiring Female Coaches and Women-Run Businesses

"I have hired female coaches and consultants to help me with a couple of my businesses. I run a podcast show by the name of 'Victim 2 Victor' and I also have a book published of the same name. I am a trauma therapist and a coach, helping clients to heal from past trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The most recent support through mentoring that I have received is with Dauntless Public Relations, a business run by women. Being supported by this team has helped me gain media exposure and I have now been featured in various publications and broadsheets. This is great publicity for my business and adds credibility to my brand and I am so grateful for this support as I wouldn't have known how to gain so much media exposure if it was not for Dauntless PR.

I highly recommend a PR mentor for anybody looking to take that next step in their business and to gain exposure and be the go-to within their industry."



Anu Verma, Trauma Therapist, Coach, Podcaster & Author at Victim2Victor ([website](#) | [Facebook](#))

Paying Mentorship Forward

"I have been blessed with opportunities to be mentored by phenomenal women through my journey in entrepreneurship. Starting out as a professional in audiology and speech pathology, I knew nothing about what I needed, to become a successful entrepreneur. So I volunteered my time and energy with phenomenal women in my desired industry that were five to seven steps ahead of me and asked for the opportunity to provide value. I served from my heart and learned quickly. As opportunities opened I boldly asked for their mentorship. All three told me, yes! As a

result, I have also said yes to a few women in their entrepreneurial journey as well."



Dr. Alisha (Ali) Griffith, CEO and Founder ([website](#) | [Instagram](#))

We Can Gift What We Never Received

"After I was widowed 10 years ago my life fell apart. I have spent the last 10 years trying to put it back together and build myself up, to be a better person. Be the best version of myself. I started my pet taxi service on a whim. I was so lost and didn't really know what to do with my life or where I was going. Being with my customers who were so grateful for my service made me feel good about myself and seeing that I could make a difference and help people really spurred me on to keep going, even when I wasn't in a good headspace.

I had no business knowledge or any idea of how to run a business. There are so many things you need to learn other than the thing that your business actually is, like marketing, social media, accounts, and publicity. I didn't know how to do any of that. But I learned, I set about not just running my service but also learning about every aspect of running a business.

It wasn't easy, with three children to raise on my own, two of whom are autistic and the extra support they needed. Running my own business completely by myself was hard! I didn't know anyone else who was self-employed, so I really didn't have anyone who could help and support me, or even give me advice.

I am now supporting a close friend of mine who is pivoting her own business, helping her to look at her current business, look at what went well, and what didn't. We're creating a business plan and are putting a structure in place to move forward so it doesn't become too overwhelming for her. I get to support her when she is having a bad day. It's really helped her. She is still at the beginning of her entrepreneurial journey and my support has been invaluable to her."

Claire Harris, Managing Director at Pets 2 Places Ltd ([website](#) | [LinkedIn](#))



Working With Our Talents

"In my experience, the best way we can lift each other up is by using our skills to educate, collaborate and inspire. We each have different talents and abilities, and by identifying those and working with them, rather than against them, we can achieve great things. I am an advocate and champion of neurodiversity, both in myself and in others, and I believe that embracing our uniqueness and the uniqueness of those we are mentoring will open the gateway to empowerment. My experiences of motherhood have greatly shaped me and my path, and I endeavour always to bring my maternal energy to the role of mentor, providing hope, possibility and belonging to those I work with. By collaborating and working as a team, I foster an inclusive environment where everyone is able to feel seen and supported.

Lastly, I strive to reach my own potential and model self-acceptance and resilience to those I hope to inspire. By sharing my own journey, I ensure that no one has to walk theirs alone."



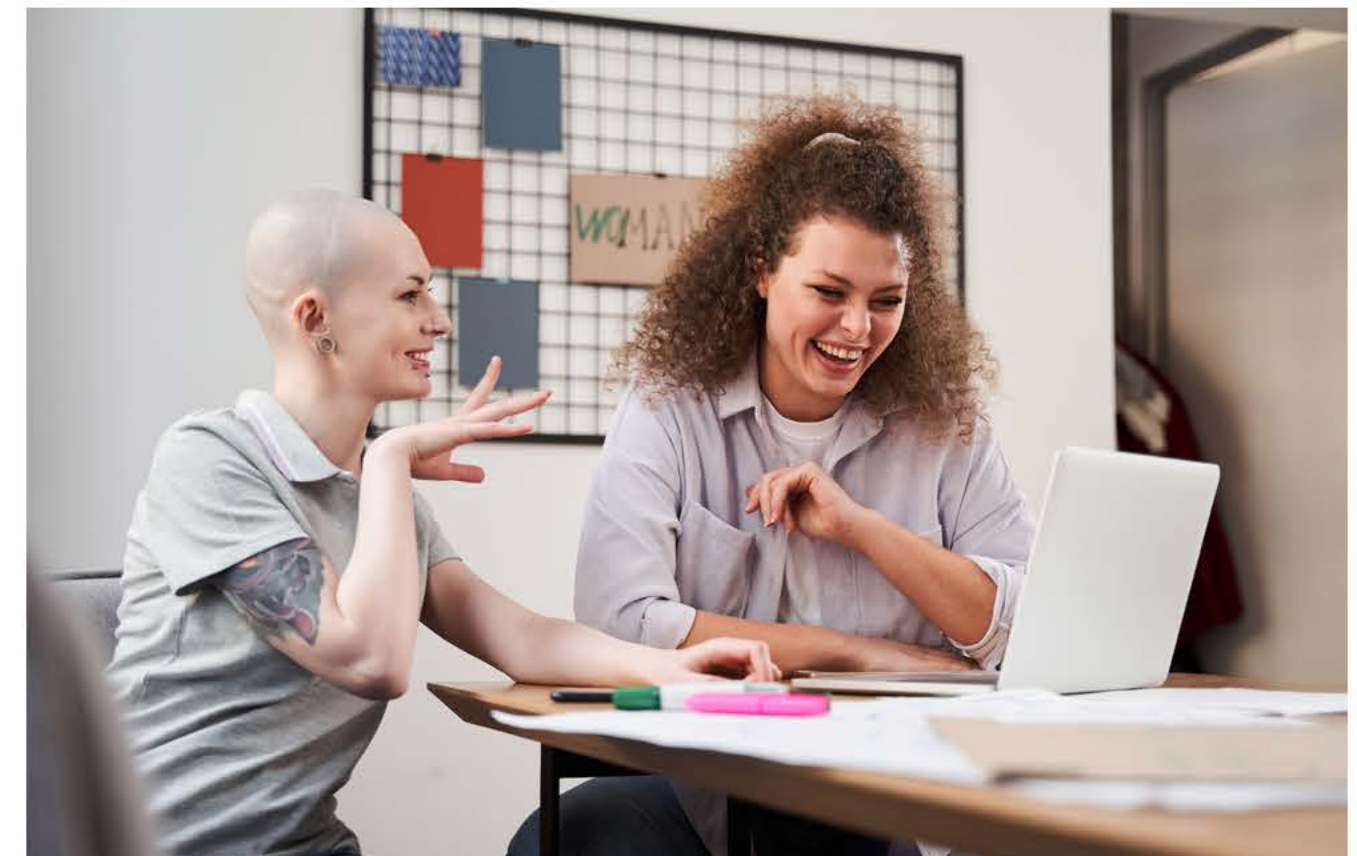
Renee Rosales, Founder and CEO at Theara ([website](#) | [Twitter](#))

Help Others Help Themselves

"Education is at the heart of everything I do, and I believe that the best way to lift others up is to teach them the skills they need to reach their personal and professional goals. I endeavour to inspire, guide and facilitate those I support on their journeys. My experiences as a Montessori informed educator have informed my approach which is gentle, nurturing and encouraging. This closely aligns with my experiences as a mother, and I try to bring that caring energy to everything I do.

I aim to foster resilience, strength and courage in those I support, enabling them to deal with setbacks and face challenges head-on. I also work hard to instil a sense of self-belief. Confidence is crucial, and having the ability to focus on long-term goals, keep learning and keep trying will help anyone you are mentoring to achieve their dreams. In essence, help others help themselves in order for them to thrive."

Suzanne Bucknam, CEO at Connecticut Explorer ([website](#) | [LinkedIn](#))



A Wealth of Female Knowledge

"The beautiful thing about a female mentor is that everyone has such individual experiences that come from being a woman in a world that has changed so much in the last 50-60 years. There is no denying that the experience is different from men's, and whether you be cis, trans, old, young, big or small, there is always an individual perspective that you bring to mentoring. For me taking advantage of learning from great professional minds is an honour. Women should readily line up to learn from the women who paved the way, because as the famous saying goes: you can't know where you are going, without knowing where you came from.

The stories and experiences are vast, which is why I think it is important to engage with multiple mentors and make use of all the female experiences and perspectives around you to learn and grow from. This is how I found it worked best to make sure I could apply a wealth of great female knowledge to my development, and also create a supportive network of wonderful people around me."



Charlotte Marshall, Lead Editor at Coupon Ninja
([website](#) | [Twitter](#))

Being Open to Advice, However Small

"Mentors can show up in many different guises, it's not necessarily about the organised meetings that I attended as a mentee but in the many networking and coaching focus groups that have allowed me the opportunity to learn from others.

I had many mentors when I attended The School for Social Entrepreneurs, the space allowed women, in particular, a space to be open about themselves and their ideas. I had formal mentoring from a former fellow whose work I had admired for some time but the best guidance came from the recipients on the course as we would attend learning sets which helped us work through a problem together, many different opinions were bantered around and this made for an opportunity to open myself up and trust the people who gave those opinions and then trust myself to make the right decision for myself.

Another great group was a coaching group that was held by a coach who was operating a practice locally, it was a bunch of coaches who were all quite different but were on the same path of trying to enlighten others about the benefits of coaching and using the space to learn from each other, share strategies for goal setting, self-care and generally have a good natter about life.

The key is to be open to taking on someone's advice however small that may be and to use people as sounding boards, you never know where it may lead."

Lynn Anderton, Life Coach & Movie therapist ([website](#) | [Facebook](#))



Mutual Empowerment Through Kindness and Authenticity

"Before I became a female entrepreneur, I never experienced support from women in higher positions who could help me in my career. It felt that these women were preoccupied with their own careers and not willing to lift other women to reach their level.

Now that I am my own boss, I decided to be different and share my expertise and experiences. I became a mentor for Mentoring Circle (www.mentoringcircle.co.uk) at the beginning of 2022 and I am also a mentee through the Market Research Society of which I am a member.

Mentoring other women means I listen carefully and try to match my perspective to her needs and personality. For me, it is about holding up a mirror and allowing the mentee to recognise strengths and challenges and find her own way to deal with them. Mentoring is about providing a safe space where both women can be open, honest and authentic.

Mutual economic empowerment comes through using kindness, integrity, and interest to boost a woman's self-awareness and ability to recognise empowerment. The mutual aspect is through growth, learning from another woman's journey."

Daphne Thissen, Founder at Thissen Consulting ([website](#) | [LinkedIn](#))



Infuse your brand with Credibility, Visibility & Connection

Are you ready to finally finish and publish your non-fiction book so you can build and boost the credibility of your online brand?

Did you know that around 85% of people WANT to write a book, but only between 1% and 5% actually make it happen?

Which group will you be in?

Sharing your story in simple and authentic ways will help you create human connection and impact along the way.

🌟 The Power of Reinvention ranked #1 in the Kindle Store in the Netherlands on the day of the launch as well as in several categories and territories worldwide.

🌟 Silja Thor pulled off a 100k launch straight after becoming a best-selling author and connecting with her leads on a much more personal level because of it.

🌟 House of Hives authors have been featured in such media outlets as Thrive Global, Entrepreneurs Magazine, Authority Magazine and many others.

FIND OUT MORE

RECLAIM YOUR GIRL AND EMPOWER YOUR WOMANHOOD

I had the beautiful opportunity to sit down with the Co-Founders of Conquer Like a Girl, Madalena Costa (who goes by Maddie) and Tamara Mosby. I met Maddie in 2020 when she spoke at The Power of Reinvention Summit and have been following her journey ever since.

By Mags Thomson

Maddie and Tamara work towards demystifying the meaning of "Like a girl" through knowledge. They embrace the phrase "like a girl" as one that communicates power. It's positive, it means what we define as womanhood. It is not something negative; it's actually something pretty awesome.

In a world where there is a lot of competition, hurtful conversations, and opposing perspectives, Conquer Like a Girl creates a safe space for women to talk about their period, pains, anything they need to learn, explore and share. Conquer Like a Girl is your safe space.

Maddie, can you tell us a little more about how you reclaimed your girl power?

I spent years obeying the rules, doing as I was told, and accomplishing every goal set before me. I obtained all the degrees, gladly accepted my spot in several events and podcast episodes, and worked hard toward the promised land. To be honest, if it hadn't been for my friends, I would have continued to develop this "great" existence—exerting myself and



Tamara Mosby



Maddie Costa

"THANK YOU CONQUER LIKE A GIRL FOR EXISTING IN MY LIFE FOR GIVING ME THE GUTS AND SPACE TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE, HONEST, AND TO QUIT SPENDING TIME ON A VERSION OF SUCCESS THAT WASN'T MINE, TO BEGIN WITH."

MADALENA COSTA (MADDIE)

my body, numbing stress, and lying about how "wonderful" everything was.

Today, I am bursting with joy and appreciation for my life; I create a space to learn and grow with the good and the bad. I am from Mozambique, Maputo and now live in Portugal, Lisbon. I've lived in different countries and explored the world with my family and friends. Each trip changed my perspective on the world and even the change I could be part of. Each encounter taught me to be more open, explore new ideas, and be mindful of others' energy, spaces, and failures.

The best advice I was given was that "If you can fail and ask for forgiveness, and be forgiven, others have the right to fail and be forgiven by you." Every time I get mad, I explore this feeling and listen to the other person. At the end of the day, we are only human, and the things we do in a moment don't have to reflect a negative life forever. Learn from your mistakes and others' mistakes. That's when you grow the most. Now, I am doing the same at Conquer Like a Girl.

Okay Tamara, your turn. How did you come to live life like a girl?

I'll introduce myself with my three passions: travelling, learning, and writing. When you put those words together, it quickly summarises my life. I majored in education and digital marketing because I believe that digital transformation cannot happen without a good learning and teaching process. That's why I'm so eager to keep learning about new technologies, tips, and methods to become a better person and professional!

Right now, I am challenging myself to live abroad, specifically in South Korea. I'm learning their culture and language. Honestly, the sky's the limit when you want to expand your knowledge! Will you fly with us?

Can you explain a little more about what Conquer Like a Girl is?

The stories and moments we encountered and lived defined our purpose in this life. A story that I will never forget, Maddie recalls, is when I was a little girl and I went into a coffee shop with family friends. Some men started objectifying me, because of the

sunglasses I had hooked on my shirt. Those men were saying that it wasn't acceptable for a young woman to have glasses there, because it was "too sexual," and "you don't know what other men might do." I was distraught and uncomfortable but didn't say anything. I just took the glasses and continued my day feeling uncomfortable. That's when it all started.

I started looking and analysing other women's interactions with men, from men mistreating them to women ignoring and mistreating other women because of men. This stuck with me for years, and I still remember some of these stories to this day. Conquer Like a Girl helped me share my story and it provided a space for women to share theirs.

Conquer Like a Girl is more than a community, a sound in the market. It has different meanings for different women. Conquer Like a Girl can be what you define it to be. It's your own version of success, of happiness, of strength, you get to decide, and no one can take that away from you. I decided to use my story as a vessel to a better yesterday, today and tomorrow, explains Maddie.

On the other hand, a story that made Tamara change her mindset and vision in life happened while travelling on a train from her hometown to Barcelona. During that short trip, next to me sat a group of teenage girls chatting away. But something about their attitude was strange, making me look over. They felt uncomfortable because a teenage boy, probably no more than fourteen years old, kept pushing one of the girls to give him her phone number. She said no to every question he asked, but he wouldn't stop asking. Then his hand went to her knee. She didn't move, just felt more and more uncomfortable. I realised that the girl was scared and somehow ashamed to stop him further. They were so young to behave like that, which made me think and feel that things had to change. After standing up and saying directly to the boy: "she said NO," I felt that I needed to do more for all girls (including myself), and that is why I became part of Conquer Like a Girl with Maddie.

What's next for Conquer Like a Girl?

We can determine our time on this planet, and it's about time we acknowledge that. This is what it means to be successful for us. This is what it means to be a feminist. This is what motivates us every single day.

Today, we shared our stories with you. Now it's your time to share your story. Conquer Like a Girl is organising a retreat for you in a safe space where you can share your own stories and ask women who are their most successful how they got there.

There will be speakers sharing their experiences and listening to yours, giving you the space to ask for advice, a room for you to grow with women that believe in you and want to truly succeed. Ready to take control of your narrative?

You are one click away from joining us!

[Sign Up For the Retreat Here](#)

Where can people find you?

If you have any questions or just want to talk, message us at [@conquerlikeagirl](#) on [Instagram](#).





CONQUER LIKE A GIRL RETREAT 2022

No one should have to walk their pain and path alone, and if you're seeking a map that combines the wisdom and experiences of other women who are willing to share them with you, the Conquer Like a Girl Retreat 2022 is for you. You have a hole in that path, but you don't have to avoid it. It can be overcome.

You get to determine your time on this planet, and it's about time you acknowledge that. This is what it means to be successful. This is what it means to be a feminist. This is what motivates us every single day.

Grab a front row seat (right from your desktop!) for one day of groundbreaking stories and advices.

Sunday, May 1st 2022

Hear other women's stories, experiences, and advice on how they got to where they are now!

TODAY (28 April 2022) is the LAST day you can register for this amazing event!

[GRAB YOUR SEAT](#)

Meet the speakers on the following pages



PAIGE MITCHELL

How can you empower women in making positive changes in their lives? Even if it's only one tiny action or emotion.

I used to think your past DEFINED you. I put all my value and worthiness in what I "achieved." Let me tell you right now, learn from my mistake. The past does not have to be your WHOLE identity! Who you were back then is just a PART of what makes you who you are today and is a chapter of your story. Some people only care about your past, but others take the time to care about where you are right now and who you are becoming. When I work with clients, I take in all aspects but more importantly, I meet them where they are in their current struggles and challenges and clarify who they want to become. I used to constantly judge and compare my "old past self" to where I am today. How come teenager Paige had more confidence, resilience and energy? What happened over the years, why aren't I good enough now, bla bla bla It's impossible to compare the "old past Paige" because she was a completely different person. I have grown and evolved and now, I can handle so more than I ever imagined. I truly believe I am capable of anything. What is ONE THING you are proud of from the past? Don't forget your journey along the way and how that makes you who you are today. Have as much grace and compassion as possible...your "old past self" will thank you.

[Find out more about Paige](#)

BRITTNAY MASEK



How can you empower women in making positive changes in their lives? Even if it's only one tiny action or emotion.

It has become my mission to make the world a better place by writing ethical copy. I'm not here to sugarcoat shit.. and I know you aren't either. I want to inspire women to make a change in their lives so that they can change the lives of others.

[Find out more about Brittnay](#)

INA COVENEY



How can you empower women in making positive changes in their lives? Even if it's only one tiny action or emotion.

Let go of growing your audience for the first year of your business. Focus on meeting your ideal client, providing your expertise, and getting paid! Get that done FIRST, then focus on audience growth.

[Find out more about Ina](#)

ABIGAIL HAYS



How can you empower women in making positive changes in their lives? Even if it's only one tiny action or emotion.

Connect with your "why," and stay glued to it. Because when you know what's underneath what you're doing, you can create momentum beyond what you ever thought was possible, results like you never believed were achievable, and create connections that will be unforgettable.

[Find out more about Abigail](#)

ANGELA MYERS



How can you empower women in making positive changes in their lives? Even if it's only one tiny action or emotion.

My biggest piece of advice to girls wanting to start a business is to put yourself out there. It can feel uncomfortable but the more you network, apply for opportunities, and promote your skills, the more your business will grow.

[Find out more about Angela](#)



How can you empower women in making positive changes in their lives? Even if it's only one tiny action or emotion.

The secret to my success in business was dropping societies hustle culture rules, and leading from my Feminine energy. This looked like, connecting with my body, reclaiming pleasure in all aspects & areas of my life & allowing my desires to determine my actions. Rules were made to be broken xoxo

[Find out more about Sophia](#)

**ARE YOU READY TO
EMPOWER YOURSELF
IN MAKING POSITIVE
CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE?**

**EVEN IF IT'S ONLY
ONE TINY ACTION OR
EMOTION?**

JOIN THE SUMMIT

HOW TO HELP FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES EMPOWER THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Today I had the pleasure to speak to Hira Almas about her experiences in the online workspace. Hailing from Pakistan, Hira is a tech and marketing executive for coaches and online course creators.

By Mags Thomson

Hira helps coaches streamline their business growth without feeling overwhelmed with tech and marketing stuff. She provides done with you and done-for-you-services. She's a tech and marketing pro, with having master's degree in computer programming, digital marketing certifications with six years of working experience in this industry.

Today, we spoke about some of the challenges that she encounters in the online workspace and how we can address those in the larger community of female entrepreneurs.



Tell us a little more about yourself, Hira. How did you get to where you are?

I am from Pakistan, a country of people full of talent. I am proud to be a part of a generation where women have so many more rights.

I belong to a Muslim family where my father is responsible for all of his family expenses including the expense of his wife, children, their school bills, in other words, all expenses. One person will earn and the whole family will eat. There is no pressure on girls to go out and earn money for their living because all her expenses should be covered by her guardian, whether that's her father, brother or husband.

When I was about 15 I became aware that my father's earnings were far less than our family's

expenses, even though he is working so hard to provide a good life. This really hurt for me. We couldn't even afford to have our own home. We lived in a joint family home with my father's brothers. There was so much to do, and he was only one man who had to do it all. I was much too young to do anything about it at that moment, so I just focused on my studies.

I was a bright student from the start of my educational career. At the age of 17, I met my soulmate, my husband. He encourage me to focus on my dreams and helped me start my business. I started working as a freelancer on different sites like Upwork and Fiverr and started earning money for my family, but that wasn't enough. My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020 and the medicine was much more expensive than my and my father's income combined. I went to

the UK and got a full-time job, while also working part-time on my business. I registered my own company in the UK and start focusing more on my business because a job can't help me to build my dream life.

I scaled my business to five figures and flew back to Pakistan to take care of my mother. Although my business was established in the UK, I can work remotely from any part of the world, and this allowed me to be close to my family while also providing financial support.

We spoke about specific challenges that Muslim women face in creating profitable online businesses, can you tell me about these challenges and how they have affected you?

I am proud to be a Muslim and I always will be, but there are some limitations for women belonging to the Muslim community. Islam doesn't oppose working women but with some limitations. Like they can't show their face to NAMAHRAM—men other than their father, brothers, husband and sons. They can't have a relationship with any men without marriage.

It was my dream to work from home so I don't



want to break any of my religious rules, and I did it. I am a proud Muslim woman entrepreneur with a six-figure business. When I started my business there was so much abuse I heard from the people around me. They thought I was doing something outside of our religious frameworks, but I wasn't. My family and my husband trusted me and they knew what I was doing. So, with their support, I overcame this community challenge and kept myself shining bright. Still, there are a lot of women here who don't have that family support and they can't do anything for themselves or their families.

How can other (female) entrepreneurs support you and your peers to overcome such challenges?

People living in developing countries are full of talent, but some people take advantage of them and pay them at a much lower rate as compared to people in western economies. As a female entrepreneur, my aim is always to help other women grow, and I would encourage others to do the same. Paying competitive rates will provide women in developing countries with enough resources to establish their empire, and create a better life for themselves, their families and their communities.

To me, success is how much your family and friends are happy, because of you. There is no big blessing rather than seeing the smiling faces of your loved ones. So, when we can support women financially, they can create that success for themselves. And remember the restrictions we face are not from the divine, but rather come from people who don't want women to be independent mentally and financially.

Where can people find you?

People can find me on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn with my name (Hira Almas)

For more information, you can visit my website. www.shvirtualhelp.com.



FEM love

My client, a Black and African American woman, was hired to manage a large change initiative at her organisation. During one of our coaching sessions, doubt and fear crept in as we prepared for her executive meeting. One statement helped her turn the corner.

"You Belong at that Table", I shared.

The work for us that day was the acceptance of that truth.

Your invitation to a meeting alone is enough to confirm **you belong on the call, in the room, at the table**. Your unique perspective, experience, and qualifications seal the deal. Nobody in the room has what you have. Nobody! But, you must be the first person to embrace it.

I work hard every day to ensure Black women feel seen and heard, and I love serving others in a way that affirms them.

Every woman needs affirmation, sometimes.

My hope in putting this T-shirt out into the world is to inspire confidence and affirm the brilliance of every person who sees it.

Lisa M. Medley ACC, BCC
Chief Executive Leadership Coach
Connect with Lisa on [LinkedIn](#)



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FEM and House of Hives are not affiliated with Lisa and do not earn from these t-shirt sales. We simply like the shirt and the idea behind it and wanted to show Lisa some FEM love!

WHY YOU NEED TO F*CK UP IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE WORLD

When I started thinking about FEM last year, I intended it to be a project that would not only be a resource for you as readers but would help me learn and grow as much as it did you.

By Mags Thomson

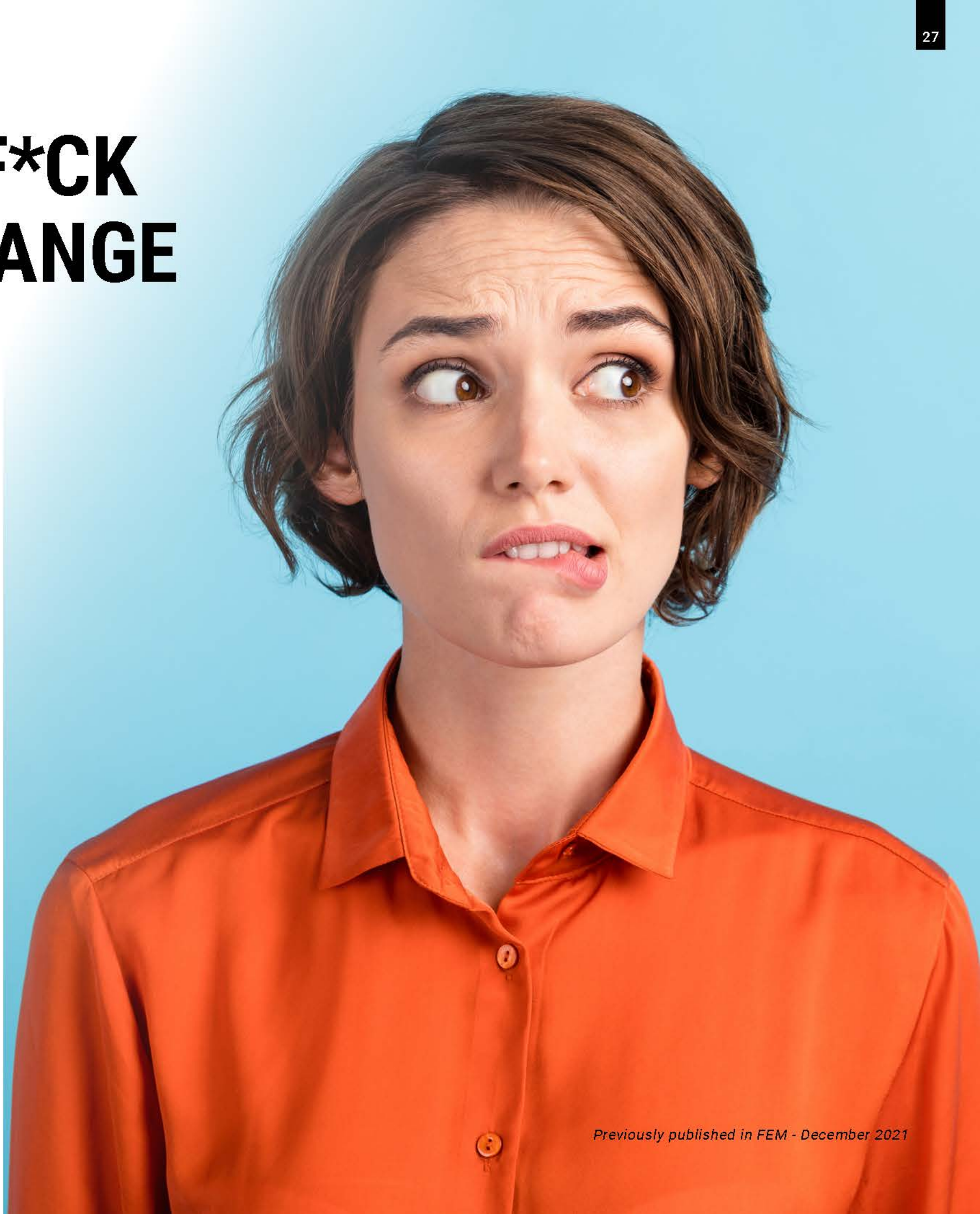
I thoroughly believe that as small business owners we have massive transformative power. Maybe even more –or at the very least faster– than some of the big corporates who have to send hundreds of memos before moving as much as an inch on the corporate social responsibility roadmap.

There is so much going on in the world, and change and conflict seem to be popping up at an unprecedented rate. We are accelerating the pace with which we are addressing power structures and finding the countless ways that these have been unfairly skewed over the decades and centuries. And now, we are trying to make things better, make things fairer, but that process seems to be far more complicated than we may have thought. Because, as much as we want to change the system, we are also part of it and that makes for a precarious balance that we need to address both as communities and individuals.

"ALL MY LIFE I'VE TOGGLED BETWEEN BEING AN ACTIVIST –SOMEONE INTERESTED IN HEALING AND CHANGING THE WORLD AROUND ME– AND AN 'INNERVIST', A WORD I MADE UP TO DESCRIBE THE PART OF ME THAT SEEKS INNER CHANGE, INNER HEALING. I'VE NEVER REGARDED ACTIVISM AND 'INNERVISM' AS MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE."

– ELIZABETH LESSER IN CASSANDRA SPEAKS

Today, I want to explore this relationship between our personal growth and healing and the way we can impact the world in positive and sustainable ways. How does or should this inform the conversation and how can we create space for people to engage in this inner and outer work.



Breaking Generational Patterns

Most of the issues we are trying to address in society right now, such as misogyny, racism, inclusivity, the wealth gap, you name it, are part of societal structures and expectations that have been in place for generations. They show up in pretty much every aspect of our communal lives. These patterns are not just locked in our stories and societal structures but are even imprinted in our DNA.

Christopher M Duncan explains this generational patterning quite effectively: "Wouldn't it be smart for animals to not only pass down genes but also fears? And for us as human beings, wouldn't it be good to have not only genes but also some in-built learnings, some in-built ways of being so we know what to do?" This is not to say that we are locked into our DNA and cannot affect change, but it does give you an indication of what we're up against. It really means that in order to change our societies, there is a need for us to rewrite our personal stories and programming.

Either through personal experiences or cultural influence, our ancestors figured out how to organise their world. What risks to take, which to avoid and what presumptions to make about people, their physical traits or behavioural choices. This is why creating societal change can feel so uncomfortable, even when rationally you agree with the necessary paradigm shift. As much as your conscious brain thinks the change should happen, your subconscious brain has generations of ancestors telling you that the status quo is the best way to survive because that's how they navigated the challenges in their times. For better or worse.

Now, it's up to us to reevaluate these beliefs and do the introspective work required to challenge these patterns. Part of that work is

acknowledging and accepting that we are part of the system we are trying to change. Even the most committed feminist or anti-racist grew up in white-centric patriarchy, and we hold beliefs and follow subconscious behaviours that are shaped by that. To change that auto-pilot behaviour means we have to increase our personal awareness of when we inadvertently support the system we are trying to change. But to do that, we have to make mistakes. How else will we realise the extent of our subconscious programming?

Why Cancel Culture May Stifle Us

One of the problems that we are facing in light of this need to make mistakes, is that as a society we've developed a 0% tolerance for mistakes. Social media has certainly been a contributing factor to the fact that people have become increasingly unwilling to show their mistakes. We say something that people don't agree with and we have people jumping down our throats in outrage, sometimes completely invalidating every other aspect of our person. It seems we live in a world where we can agree on 99 things, but if we don't agree on the 100th? We cannot possibly be friends. But more than that, we can be amazingly compassionate, thoughtful and supportive people for 364 days of the year, but just because we tripped on some generational patterning one day, we are cast aside as frauds.

This extreme pressure to show up perfectly every single time is exhausting and makes it impossible to do the introspective work that is required to begin shifting the beliefs that inform our subconscious behaviour. We need to explore our thoughts and feelings and most especially we need to be allowed to fuck up, so we can learn from our mistakes.

By that, I don't mean to say that we shouldn't put our best foot forward and try not to

make mistakes. I just mean that cancelling every person who makes a mistake, is an overcorrection of not holding people accountable at all. Perhaps the measure of the consequences should not be in the making of mistakes, but the making of progress.

The thread of social exclusion that cancel-culture contains is so severe, that it may leave people unwilling to make changes, reiterating the idea that the old structures are safer and should be clung to.

Slow and Steady Feels Frustrating

For those of us who are marginalised for our gender, shape, colour, beliefs or combination of those, the slow dismantling of these systems can feel super frustrating and aggravating. We can see the injustice and imbalance and how it is affecting everyone, and yet we keep bombing up against people who seem oblivious to the issue AND the way they are keeping it in place. We hear an otherwise quite enlightened friend say something super sexist and we think: "what the actual fuck? Can we get with the programme already?"

Slow and steady, as frustrating as it can be, does seem to be the route to the most sustainable change. Still, seeing your freedoms be trampled on by a seemingly oblivious and uncaring majority isn't easy to swallow and can frankly be rage infusing. So, how do we deal with this frustration and speed up the change process?

Focussing on the most aggravating situations and most unenlightened voices may feel like the shortest path from where we are to where we want to be, but maybe it is not. I am sure all of us have worked with a client at some point who just didn't want to hear our feedback, wasn't ready for the mindset shift and generally felt impossible to work with. It's exhausting to

work like that, and it puts us at risk of burning out. The same is true for how we show up as activists in the world. Perhaps we have to consider that the most powerful way to create change is to build on the existing momentum with people who are already open to change.

Having conversations with people who are already questioning their innate patterning and programming, who are already trying to create change means we are speeding up a process that is already moving, rather than pushing against a mountain that simply doesn't want to move. Sharing experiences, resources, inspiration and feedback with people who are willing to consider your insights and pivot when needed doesn't just increase the momentum, but also starts that ripple effect of change through all our personal networks.

Accommodating Critical Discourse

I understand that you may feel my insistence to focus our activism on our inner work and within groups already open to change illustrates my personal privilege. I get it, and it does. I am not immune to the reflection of inner and outer when it comes to my place in the world. What I am noticing more and more though, is that we are becoming incapable of talking with each other and are losing our ability to explore and reason with people who are not 100% on our page. This trend is one that is making it near impossible to create change and examine how our subconscious mind is impacting our behaviour. And please don't underestimate the way that 'the powers be' are dividing and conquering.

In order to heal our ability to have constructive discussions and learn from our collective experiences and knowledge, we need to practice. That's easier with people who are open to that learning too. In fact, forcing people who are not ready for that learning

may have the unintended effect of creating further distance. As we re-discover our skills to converse, process criticism and question our assumptions, we will become more able to extend our conversations to those who are further and further apart from our own viewpoints. Besides, by then you will have already established the people around you who can support you in those conversations.

But how do we accommodate this critical discourse in our actual day-to-day life? For me, it's about gaining more understanding of my own subconscious and my emotional responses to things. It could mean that when a friend says something unexpected and potentially offensive, I ask questions and start a conversation that is aimed at furthering my understanding, rather than on chastising them or changing their mind. I may still achieve the latter, but I cannot set out to preach if we want to invite introspection and change in others. It may also look like seeing the best in people. Rather than focusing on their words, can I focus on their intentions?

By no means do I want to suggest you make yourself responsible for someone else's emotional labour, or have to take crap from people. As much as I think it is important for you to open up to the conversation, you may also expect the same from others. Critical discourse requires open communication from all sides.

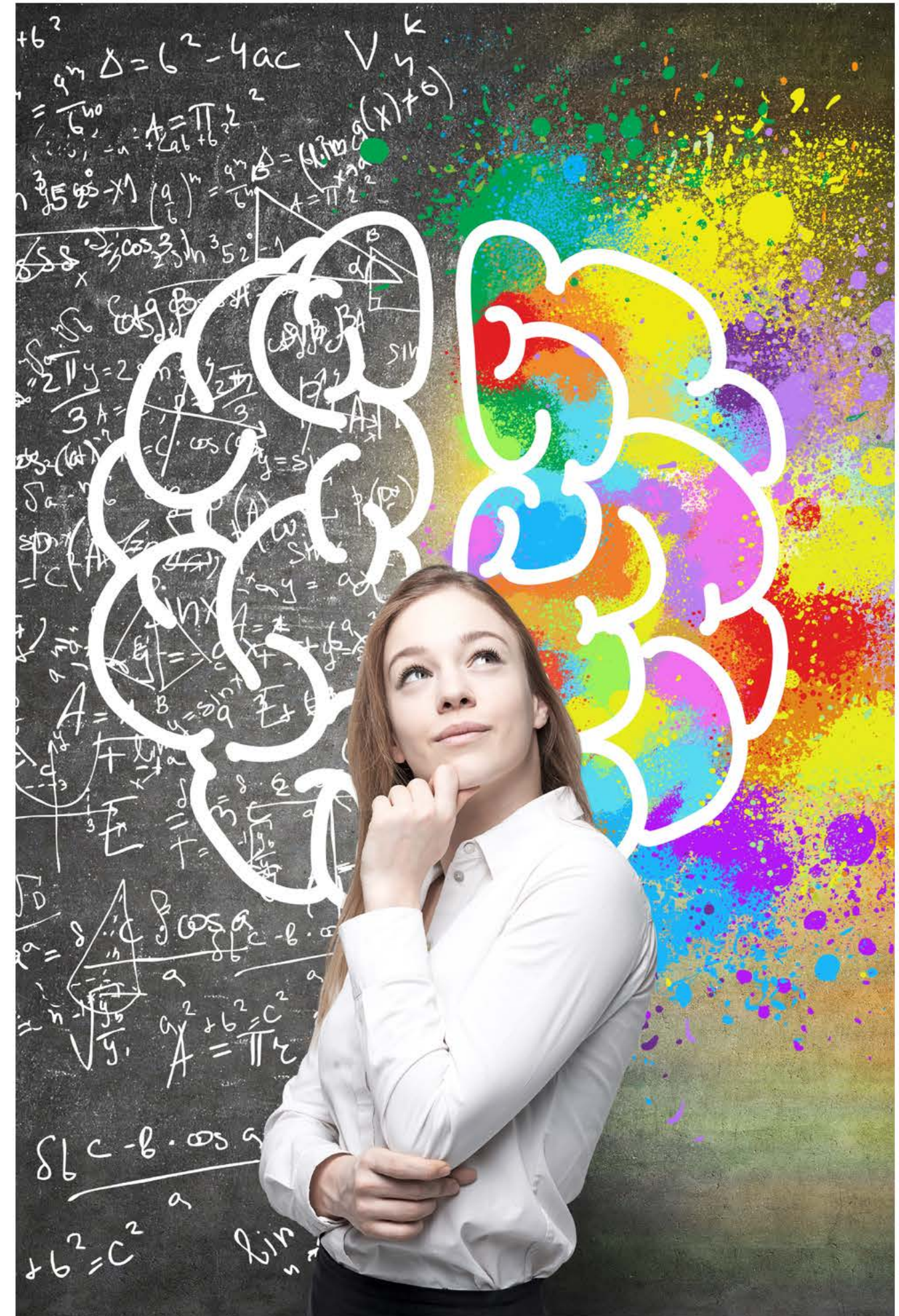
Supporting Each Other's Vulnerability

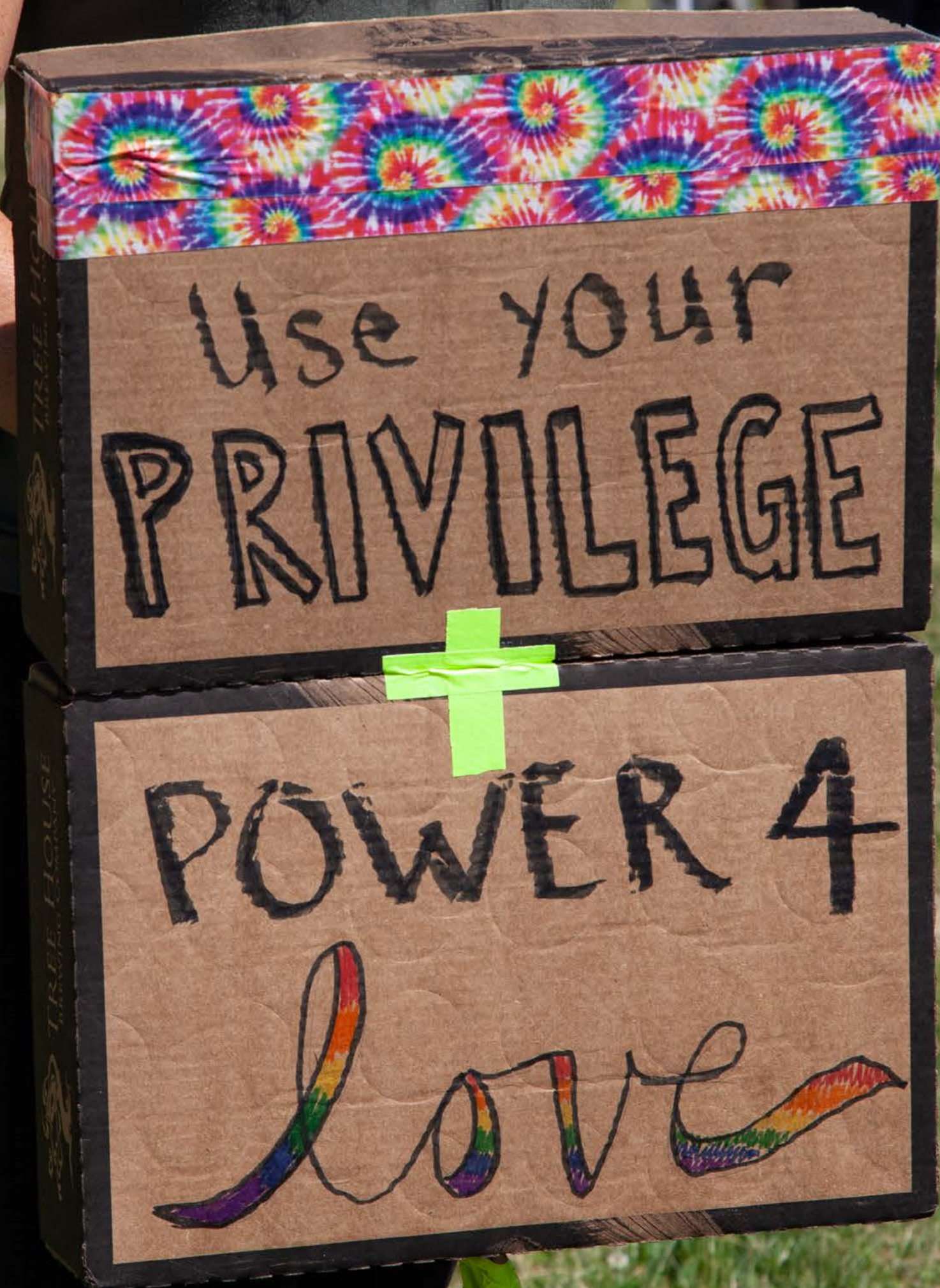
However we approach our desire to change the world, one thing seems clear to me: change is uncomfortable for everyone! Even when we believe in the need for change or see how it will make our lives better, our lizard brain will still resist. However shit the situation we find ourselves in, our survival instinct would rather deal with the devil it knows. Who knows what challenges we face as we empower ourselves? Best just sit in our frustrations, because we've learned how to navigate this system AND the negative emotions it may bring us.

If we can acknowledge the global discomfort and desire for safety and stability, we can support each other to lean into the vulnerability to create change.

Owning our personal learning journey and leading by example are the only ways we can truly inspire change. Rather than talking the talk, we need to walk the walk. That brings me back to the reason I founded FEM, as a resource for our communal learning curve.

I may get it wrong sometimes, in which case I hope you will add your voices to the conversation. I hope we can create ripples of change through the articles, conversations and through our businesses. Let's go on a journey together, and see if we can change the world for the better in the process!





In the next edition of FEM we will be talking about being an ally for marginalised groups.

What are the questions you have about this?

Do you have amazing resources that the team and I just HAVE to check out?

Do you want to become a contributor to FEM and share your own insights and experiences?

Just get in touch!

**FEM IS A HOUSE OF HIVES
PUBLICATION.**

Editor in chief: Mags Thomson

Contact FEM by [email](#).

Photos of Mags Thomson by

[Evamaria Kulovits](#)