

REDEFINING **BUSINESS** SUCCESS

THE
Heart Centred Way 

7 BUSINESS OWNERS WHO HAVE FOUND
SUCCESS IN A CHANGING WORLD

INTRODUCING THE 6 SELVES MODEL™



**SPIRITUAL
SELF**



**EMOTIONAL
SELF**



**LEGACY
SELF**



**VALUED
SELF**



**ECOLOGICAL
SELF**



**SEXUAL
SELF**

OUR AUTHORS

Debbie Zita, Vanessa Thomas, Donna Sulja, Greg Roworth,
Charith Bandara, Phoebe Lay and John Di Natale

FOREWORD BY RACHEL CASSIDY
FORMER STATE FINALIST IN THE AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

REDEFINING
BUSINESS
SUCCESS

^{THE} Heart Centred Way 

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PUBLISHING

"This book will open your eyes to a new kind of business. One that is emerging in our changing times. A more inclusive and feminine power open to all genders, all races and all individuals willing to walk the path of this brave new world"

Jeremiah O. Sarkett, Senior Partner Manager Infusionsoft Australia and The Pacific

"Through the ups and downs we are reminded of the importance of a more heart centred approach to wealth and that although money is an important ingredient, it is of equal value how we spend it and treat others along the way

Kyoko Yoshizumi, Director Happy Rich Pty Ltd

"This book is a delightful guide for business owners who want to create a successful heart centred business. The authors share how their unique life experiences led them to courageously pursue the creation of a business from a fire that was ignited within. The weaving together of the authors accounts provides valuable insights into the life of an entrepreneur as well as guidelines for navigating the challenges of attaining business success and simultaneously staying true to their inner truth"

Helen Mitas, Founder of Hypnofit, Author, International Speaker

'At a time when anxiety and overwhelm are prevalent, this book offers a valuable resource to business owners. Too often the wellness journey is replaced with traditional success and a push through approach. This book will challenge that. Be guided through the stories held within, to a place where balance and harmony are the norm.'

Amanda Dickie, Author and Director Essence of Life

"What a game changer this book is! This is the move to a new paradigm of wealth creation and understanding business growth. The personal shares from the authors is heartfelt and genuine, helping readers to know they can do it too!"

Marilou Coombe – Founder of Orchestrate Coaching & Consulting

"As a small business owner, it was so inspiring to hear each author's unique journey to a heart-centered business mindset and how they responded to crises along the way. In times of crisis, it is so easy to switch into survival mode – focusing on income and getting through to the other side relatively intact. This book is a wonderful reminder that connecting to Source, tuning into our deepest wisdom, and showing up in service to others is the bridge to sustainable and authentic success in all areas of our lives."

Kellie Ffrench, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist Orlando Florida

"This is a real gem of a book. We so often hear of this word in business "success" and immediately thought bubbles of money, popularity, being known and "achievement" float to the surface. What this book does is redefine success as something that can only be found by going beyond these popular concepts. To do business as defined within this heart-centred approach, is to know that life has a bigger purpose lined up for us. Throw away the idea that you have to "fight" for everything you want and open your mind to the idea that you just need to listen to your life and respond from the heart. Be passionate, be creative, be positive, but be flexible and be prepared to sit in the heart of your life if you really want to learn the art of true success."

Steve Ray Group Work Facilitator

"This book is a pure and sincere twist of circumstances that will have you all on the edge of your seats to see why these businesspeople took a path invited through their own heart journey. It whispers to them in the breeze and shows sincerity, thoughtfulness, kindness like no other. A must read of many accounts of authors' own business journeys, grit, and determination, without knowing why they do the things they love except to say that it must come from within. Truly a wonderful read if you want to follow your heart and succeed in business professionally and of course without a doubt personally too."

**Clare Jennings, Marketing Co-ordinator and
businesswomen, City of Melbourne and Natural
Walking Instructor**

“An absolutely amazing read! So insightful, so inspiring and so very real.

Each individuals story took me on a journey of trials and triumphs that could be related to in my own personal way. A fantastic collective of experiences that showcase how a heart centred philosophy really is the centre of it all. No matter what we accumulate it is the journey that teaches us who we are and what we can truly accomplish. Hearing how each one of these incredible people took what was presented to them in their stride and pushed through some very challenging situations, to come out the other side with an invigorated spirit and mentality is extremely inspiring and a ‘must read’ for all.”

Belinda Mammone – Co-owner and Business Manager

“This book is a timely offering into our modern world, which is yearning for more authenticity, connection and heart led leaders and purpose driven businesses. The collection of different voices, which beautifully echo similar themes to each other, culminate in a delicious and powerful reminder that when we work from the inside out and offer our gifts with heart and pure intention to the world, abundance will flow. We are moving into a time on our planet where old ways of working are being dismantled and this book is perfectly timed to help to spread the message of heart led work and a new definition of success.”

Alicia Dumais Temmerman, Lawyer, Author of PURE ENERGY and Founder of the Global Soul Centre

"I am firmly of the conviction that following a heart-centred way in both business and life is the way of the future. This book shows us it is possible as we get to know six inspiring business leaders who have travelled their own paths towards a heart-centred life that is abundant and successful. The authors are an example of the heart-centred way."

Jenine Klarenaar, Marketing Manager Danish by Design

REDEFINING BUSINESS SUCCESS

DEDICATED TO EVERY
HEART FELT BUSINESS OWNER

Q: WHAT IS HEART CENTRED?

A: The relationship between the most authentic aspect of a human being and all of life

Q: WHAT IS BUSINESS SUCCESS?

A: Read on to discover your definition...

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FOREWORD

BY RACHEL CASSIDY

It is with great pleasure that I am writing the foreword for this new book to reflect the vision of businesswoman and leadership mentor, Debbie Zita.

Redefining Business Success is filled with triumphs over challenges that all business owners face at various stages of their career - but not all have the tenacity and sheer determination to successfully navigate their way through the obstacles to get to the other side. This book takes the reader on a rollercoaster ride through a kaleidoscope of events, as each of the seven individuals tell their own story of developing life-changing skills to conquer adversity with the true grit that makes these inspiring business owners truly exceptional.

Through powerful storytelling, the businesspeople and leaders featured in this book bring to life enthralling and riveting accounts of the real life peaks and valleys which business owners face and overcome.

A must-read for anyone seeking a captivating insight into the reality of the modern day business world in Australia.

Rachel Cassidy

Author - Fiction/Nonfiction/Adults/Children's

PREFACE

BY SAMANTHA JANSEN

What does success mean to you?

After seven years in business I have seen many seasons, challenges, and successes. Success to me is based on living my life purpose every day, despite the challenges and uncertainty in this crazy season (the COVID-19 global pandemic).

Reflecting back on each season in my business, it either taught me something new, or I was challenged to review a process and change.

I can personally tell you countless stories of bad decisions, not making a decision fast enough or being too emotionally attached to specific outcomes. That's another tale for another book.

I see a common thread with these authors and they will agree that change was paramount to their success. The ability to review and adapt at a critical moment made all the difference.

I have met every author in person; they have unique stories and a genuine desire to serve and make a difference: in their community, nationally, and globally. This book is a snapshot of their business and personal insights.

Spend an hour with them and you will want more, trust me. They have been through dark times, battled doubts, overcome multiple challenges, and adapted to change. These authors have some serious skills and they have skin in the game.

The ones that choose to make a difference daily are the ones who are bold and strong enough to survive change. Their persistence is rewarded with success. I have seen this time and time again - ask the authors and they will tell you the same thing.

As you read these chapters, I encourage you to position your thinking beyond the words and the principles shared. Ask yourself, 'What can I learn from this? Has this got me thinking about something I should explore? What does success truly mean to me?'

Be brave,

Be bold,

Be courageous.

Make decisions aligned to your values.

Surround yourself with the right people, with similar values.

Your self-belief and can-do attitude will determine your success in life and business.

Samantha Jansen

INTRODUCTION

BY DEBBIE ZITA

FOUNDER OF 'THE HEART CENTRED WAY'

Hey you,

I am so glad that you are here! Can I tell you a secret?

Not in a million years did I expect the dramatic events which would unfold, back when I first had the vision to create a heart centred community, or the journey that lay ahead when the words '*redefining business success*' entered my mind. It was way back in a time when masks were only worn by dentists, nurses and nail technicians. What I knew back then, however, was the strength and the sentiment behind the words 'heart' and 'business success'.

Be inspired as you read the heart warming and thought provoking stories of seven extremely successful entrepreneurs (including me) who share the remarkable rollercoaster ride that is the business journey.

Who is this book for?

1. The start-up business owner with a fire in their heart.
2. The veteran business owner who has lived through the seasons of change.
3. The lifelong learner who welcomes knowledge and growth in every life area.

My wish for you?

Personal and professional success!

To assist the process, I have developed a model of inquiry called The 6 Selves™. After two decades dedicated to studying human behaviour and how we relate to the world emotionally and spiritually (and in recent years, financially) it has become apparent that business is a rich landscape for personal development. With each challenge of slaying the dragon¹ in the form of money loss, client complaints, bankruptcy or even pandemics – we are faced with an opportunity to flourish.

2 Common Challenges:

Mastering The Inner Game – Battling Self Doubt²

Mastering The Outer Game – Cash Flow³

We may have been taught that the ‘Inner Game’ is won by a positive mindset, often referred to as a ‘Growth Mindset’. The ‘Outer Game’ tends to be won by strategy such as marketing or sales expertise. However, I have witnessed the success we access when we enter a ‘heart space’ – a place of divinity and spirituality.

Before you book into a yoga class, recite your mantra or mindfully breathe - I encourage you to dissolve any preconceived notions you may have about spirituality being only for those who have lived in ashrams or trekked to the Himalayas.

1. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero's Journey* Joseph Campbell on his life and work (Harper Collins, 1990)

2. Leon F Seltzer Ph D. *Anxiety and Self-Doubt: Perfect Recipe for Under Achievement* (Psychology Today, Sussex Publications, 2020)

3. Bill Hardekopf, *Why Small Businesses Are Struggling With Cash Flow* (Forbes.com, Forbes Media, 2020)

This book will also delve into topics such as creating your own legacy and the multi-layered relationships we have with all aspects of 'self'.

The Theory behind The 6 Selves™:

Inspired by Systems Thinking and Logical Levels of Change.

Systems Thinking has been used to solve complex problems. One aspect of this theory is interconnectedness, which is a fundamental shift in mindset from linear to circular⁴. This allows us to shift the way we view the world.

Logical Levels of Change by Robert B. Dilts is a framework designed to demonstrate the relationship between our external environment, our behaviours, capabilities, values and beliefs, identity, and finally, our purpose.⁵

How to use this book:

For a profoundly transformational experience:

1. Meditate before you read on any further. Research demonstrates that meditation activates certain areas of the brain that encourage new pathways. Being a lifelong seeker of the truth, I have spent thousands of hours in meditation. The one I recommend is non-denominational, designed to work alongside your existing religious or spiritual practices and is far deeper than just 'a quiet mind' - it is called 'Open Heart Meditation' by Irmansyah Effendi⁶

⁴ Leyla Acaroglu, Disruptive Design. Tools for Systems Thinkers: The 6 Fundamental Concepts of Systems Thinking (The Medium App, 2020)

⁵ Andy Smith, Levels of Change: The NLP 'Logical Levels' Model (Coaching Leaders, England, 2017)

⁶ Accessible via YouTube. Or go to naturalwayofliving.com. Evidence based research for this practice is also available at heartbased.org

2. Now that you are in a 'heart space' and feeling calm, peaceful and relaxed, take your time to get to know The 6 Selves™. Read about them on the next page with a sense of curiosity.
3. Next, read each story with a sense of openness about the author's unique struggles and triumphs. Use The 6 Selves™ to guide your perspective and take a moment to 'find yourself in the story'.
4. Write down any 'aha' moments. This may seem trivial, however, after mentoring hundreds of people over the years, I've found that this step is key to discovering where your 'inner attention' lies. Your inner attention is where your energy is directed (thoughts, feelings and beliefs).

For example, Are you still angry at your ex?

Are you still annoyed at the business partner who stole \$100K?

Are you longing to write a book?

Notice and keep track of these feelings so you can shift the trajectory accordingly.

5. Learn more by reading 'The 6 Stories Behind The 6 Selves™'
6. Lastly, take some time to create a map for your next 12 months by answering the questions found at the end of each 6 Self section.

The 6 Key Questions:

The Spiritual Self - Who would I be without this physical life, body and mind?

The Emotional Self - Who would I be without my extreme emotions ruling my sense of self and my decision making abilities?

The Legacy Self - What do I want to be known for, a thousand years after I am gone?

The Valued Self - What positive changes might occur if I placed more energy on the individuals who valued me the most?

The Ecological Self - If you felt 'I belong' in every room you entered in your experience of life, how might you show up? (If you had no fear or insecurity, how might you behave?)

The Sexual Self - Who would I be in the world if I gave myself full permission to express myself unashamedly?

Enjoy getting to know these outstanding authors and their incredible stories!

With passion in my heart and a longing to redefine the landscape of both business and success,

Debbie Zita

Founder, The Heart Centred Way™

Creator, The 6 Selves™

Author, 'Ignite Your Joy - How to Invite More Love, Purpose and Profit into Your Life'

THE 6 SELVES™



S

THE SPIRITUAL SELF

The Spiritual Self forms the core basis of who we truly are. It goes to the existential query of Who am I? and Why am I here? It understands itself beyond time and space and views our world as a 'moment in time' experience. It functions from a place of wise compassionate strength that resides within the Spiritual Heart and is expressed in our daily lives. Ask yourself, *"Who would I be without this physical life, body & mind?"*



E

THE EMOTIONAL SELF

The Emotional Self forms the part of us that has evolved beyond the 'monkey mind' or 'reptilian brain' (the less evolved aspects of self). It understands and embraces its emotional triggers and is continuously seeking growth. It is striving to function from an emotionally balanced position without overly suppressing or overtly expressing itself. Ask yourself, *"Who would I be without my extreme emotions ruling my sense of self and my decision making abilities?"*



L

THE LEGACY SELF

The Legacy Self forms the part of us that is deeply connected to the ever evolving world and our relationship with it. It is the ability to authentically and gracefully express ourselves through our projects, businesses and causes in a way that is fully aligned with our unique values, talents and skills. Ask yourself, *"What do I want to be known for 1000 years after I am gone?"*



V

THE VALUED SELF

The Valued Self forms our innate authentic power and its ability to operate and express itself in the ever changing moment. On a personal level it is the capacity to set and express healthy boundaries with friends, family and partners. On a professional level it is the capacity to earn and spend money as well as to only align ourselves with stakeholders who value our ideas, time and energy. Ask yourself *"What positive changes might occur if I placed more energy on the individuals who value me the most?"*



E

THE ECOLOGICAL SELF

The Ecological Self forms the deep part of our identity that has gone beyond the confines of the beliefs and concepts as adopted by its family of origin, culture or even its life experiences. When these unconscious fields of influences are dissolved we adopt an 'I belong here' approach to life as opposed to a 'Do I belong here?' approach. Ask yourself *"If you felt 'I belong here' in every room you entered in your experience of life, how might you show up?"*



S

THE SEXUAL SELF

The Sexual Self forms the part of us that is as equally open to giving as it is at receiving. It has accessed a place within where masculine and feminine dance rhythmically and it has a continuous flow of creativity that infuses a magnetic quality drawing resources in the form of people, finances and opportunities almost as if by magic. Ask yourself *"Who would I be in the world, if I gave myself full permission to express myself unashamedly?"*



THE SPIRITUAL SELF

“I let go of my ego and put
my faith in a higher source
to see me through”

VANESSA THOMAS



Vanessa Thomas



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vanessa Thomas is the owner of Synkd, a Melbourne brand and design agency specialising in 'bringing brands to life'.

Synkd's mission is to help small businesses get 'in sync' with their ideal customers through the power of design and creativity. Synkd do this by breathing new life into brands through beautifully designed, commercially driven, visual solutions that attract ideal customers for profitable business growth.

With an Honours degree in Visual Communication and 20 years of design industry experience in Melbourne and the UK, she's a pioneering and creative entrepreneur, establishing Synkd in 2010 and the insightful 'My Avatar' business tool, which sets her apart from her peers.

Vanessa is experienced across multiple design disciplines; however, her passion and drive is focused on branding, with the creative ability and flexibility to deliver marketing collateral in line with design briefs, budget and deadlines.

Some notable works and clients include the City of Melbourne brand roll out, Jemena, The Department of Justice and Sustainability Victoria, to name a few.

Vanessa's personable yet professional approach and creative reputation have successfully forged long-term relationships with several local Councils, including Cities of Greater Dandenong, Mooney Valley and Wyndham Councils.

Vanessa lives in Melbourne with her husband, three children, two dogs and beloved Harry Potter Collection. She enjoys bike riding, spas, reading fiction and kicking autumn leaves when the kids aren't looking.

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In Sync with Success

BY VANESSA THOMAS

When I was asked to write a chapter for this book my heart started to pound, and all of my self-doubt and fear crept up. So, I'm being brave and facing my fears by writing this chapter. I felt that I didn't have much of a story to tell about my business success, in fact, my exact words were, "Well my story is boring; I knew what I wanted to do from a young age and I just pursued it with laser focus!"

However, with a little unpacking I realised those early years formed the bedrock of how I measure success in my business today and how I run my business. My name is Vanessa Thomas and I'm a wife to an amazing husband, a mum to three gorgeous children, and a business owner of 10 years. My brand and design company, Synkd Pty Ltd, has allowed me to grow as a designer, support my family and help all of our wonderful clients engage with their stakeholders and bring their businesses and brand to life - which makes my heart sing, as I'm one of the lucky ones that I get to do what I love every day. But where did it all start?

Let's go back to the beginning. Year 7 began and I was excited to be a secondary student. We had a new subject I didn't know anything about, and it was called Graphic Communication. It was a compulsory subject so I had to take the class. My teacher was a great 'Trade' teacher, however he wasn't a great Graphic Communication teacher. I wasn't engaged in his class; I absolutely hated going to his sessions, they were boring, I didn't get it.

I just couldn't understand how you would use this subject in life and it simply wasn't fun. I remember speaking to a friend about how much I hated the class and I said to her (imagine a whiny 13-year-old-voice) "If I ever do anything in 'graphics', shoot me!" Well, a water pistol will be just fine, thanks.

Oh, the irony. I had the same teacher for Year 8 and again hated every single class he taught. I'm a bit of a nerd and have always been a high achiever. I was getting great grades in all of my subjects, but not in this one class that I despised so much.

Year 9 came around and I got another teacher for Graphic Communication. For the first time I found the class enjoyable. He was able to make this subject connect with me at a deep level, so that my curiosity was piqued and my enjoyment for this subject grew. In hindsight this amazing teacher was the turning point for my future success.

In Year 10 we all undertook work experience. It still amazes me to this day how my school managed it, but I was able to get a week's worth of experience assisting within a design studio in Prahran. Work experience

within a design studio is an extremely difficult thing to find, especially when you're in Year 10, but luckily enough I won a position.

I remember walking into that studio for the first time and being blown away at how amazing the place was. They had converted an old church into a working studio. The studio had four designers and a receptionist who were all absolutely lovely. They all really enjoyed working with each other. They always had lunch together and had a lot of fun. What I was seeing was the 'culture' of the place but as a 15-year-old, I didn't truly understand this.

All I knew was that it felt warm and inviting and it was fun to be working in such a space. I was there to observe, I was never going to be working on projects, but they allowed me to support them with photocopying and other small tasks. They were working on a massive project and my assistance meant they could get on with what they were doing and not stop the flow of design. This then led them to offer me two more weeks' worth of design experience. They even offered to pay me \$300 for the three weeks. I was blown away! I was only helping them with photocopying or getting tea/coffee, but what I understood was that the role that I played was of value to them. It wasn't about the \$300, although that did shock me as a teenager that I could earn something like that. You only got \$5 a week back then. My 15-year-self took on the belief that the work you do is important and valuable, and you get paid well for what you love to do.

This experience spurred me on. I was so determined to work as a graphic designer. I loved the whole experience and it got me excited. So, in Years 11 and 12 when Graphic Communication was an elective, I chose the subject and did every other subject that could support my future career choice.

Year 12 came along, and as I mentioned I'm a bit of a high achiever. I was a straight-A student. I was the Dux three years in a row, and was proud to end up as the Valedictorian in Year 12. I knew what I wanted to do after school, I knew exactly which university I wanted to get into. I had clarity. The future was bright, or was it?

Filling in my forms to get into the university of my dreams was easy. I confidently filled in the forms for the other two universities that offered Graphic Design as a precaution, and I filled in all the forms for the TAFE courses as a 'just in case' but I knew this wasn't going to be a problem. I was a straight-A student, after all. I was bound to get into my first choice, right? Youthful arrogance or wilful enthusiasm? You decide.

The big day arrived for the acceptance letters and to my shock and horror not only did I not get into Swinburne, my preferred university, but I didn't get into either of the other two backup universities either. To compound the shock, I also failed to get into any of the TAFEs. For the first time in my life I had 'failed'. I was shocked. I broke down in tears and didn't know how it could have gone so wrong. What was I going to do? I didn't know what to do, I was numb, I was lost, I had failed, and I was a wreck. Thankfully, I have a supportive family who were there for me, but it still left me with a hole in my life thinking,

‘What on earth am I going to do now?’

After a while, I steeled myself and got to thinking, “There must be another way to look at this. What can I learn from this? What can I do to get me to where I want to go? Surely there must be some alternatives that I haven’t thought of?” And there were!

After doing some research I found I had two options available to me. One was a Year 13 at a nearby school that offered a year of graphic design to build a portfolio of work, and the other was a part time TAFE course to do the same thing.

I chose the TAFE course and for the first time went into it with less expectation, no ego. I wasn’t this smart A-grade student who ‘deserved to be here’. No, I was an extremely humble young lady who wanted to learn as much as I could and hone my skills by studying under brilliant teachers who were from the world of Graphic Design. My amazing TAFE teacher was taught at Swinburne, his wife was also a designer and was taught at Swinburne and she worked in a prestigious design studio that we were educated about. I was finally surrounded by the right type of people to help me achieve my goal. As amazing as my Year 9 schoolteacher was, he wasn’t a trained designer, he hadn’t attended any design schools. He did the best he could with the skill sets he had, so it was no wonder my Year 12 portfolio was not suited to be chosen for the universities and TAFEs that specialised in graphic design. I didn’t yet have a true understanding of what was required to succeed in my application and in a career in graphic design.

After an amazing year of learning the most remarkable skills and learning to work with my fellow students as part of a team or on my own, I felt confident to reapply for the universities again. With trepidation in my heart, I submitted to Swinburne, RMIT and Monash universities. I also applied to a few TAFE courses.

Once again, it came time to wait for the university acceptance letters. The first letter came from Swinburne. I was too scared to open the envelope. What if I failed again? I couldn't do this again. I couldn't feel that pain again. I remember the anxiety and nervousness when I opened that letter. My heart was pounding so hard, I'm sure my parents could hear it. I skimmed over the letter without actually reading it, my eyesight was blurry, I couldn't breathe, but I forced myself to focus. With a wave of relief and tears I saw the words I so desperately wanted to see. 'You have been accepted into Swinburne University.'

I think I cried as much as I did the first time, only happy tears. But it didn't stop there. I also received letters of acceptance from RMIT, Monash and all of the TAFEs I had applied for. It was the complete opposite to the year before. I humbly accepted my preferred choice and went on to three years of university study, plus an honours in my fourth year working for the university, which then enabled me to get my first dream design job with one of the 'giants of the design world' I was brought up on.

Fast forward a few years and I've been able to work with some brilliant design companies, both here and in the UK. I expanded my skill sets, I learnt how other businesses did things and what I would do if I ran my own business.

Ever since my university days, I knew that I wanted to start my own business, and I started Synkd in 2010. What I wanted most was to capture the warmth, culture and love of design I experienced when I was 15 in my work experience placement. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of my clients. I wanted the work I did to matter.

Now that I've been in business for 10 years, what have I learnt and how do I define success?

Success to me is not determined by the amount of money you have in your bank account. (Although that is always helpful!) It's about the small things.

It's about:

1. Finding the right people to be your teachers/mentors - they make a world of difference to your career/business path. Being surrounded by the right people (including your immediate team) helps you to grow and excel. I also have an amazing mentor who works on my personal development.
2. A cliché, but being inspired to do the things you love is imperative. Enjoy what it is you do and do it with passion and purpose. Be inspired to try new things even if they scare you to death - like writing this chapter, you just don't realise how powerful you are and how much you can contribute back, plus you may just learn something awesome about yourself in the process. My business has grown over the past 12 months to express brands and really bring them to life online through websites. This new skill set scared the life out of me when I first started. Now, I've currently got four sites on the go and I get excited seeing them

go live. Knowing I've grown as a studio and as a person is even more satisfying and fulfilling. I'm gratified by the knowledge that I've been able to do and achieve new things that otherwise would have stopped me moving forward.

3. Culture is extremely important to my business, my wider brand and business success. I run the business how I was treated all those years ago. Synkd is a place where people want to work. They get to experience a variety of projects. They are valued and part of a family. It's an enjoyable place to work and we have clients we love working with. One of our longest clients, who have been with us since the start, have become my dearest of friends. They have seen me build my business over the years, seen my family grow and have allowed us to contribute to their business. To me, that is business success.

4. I've learned to always be humble. I learnt this the hard way. Never assume you're going to get that job, that application, that tender. Be humble and gracious for what the universe provides you. My mentor taught me to always look for the gift in every situation, even when you think you've hit rock bottom. Ask yourself, "What can you learn from this situation? What's the lesson I need to take from this?" Failure is not always a bad thing. I know looking back at the 'failed' university applications, the gift in this failure was I wasn't ready yet. I didn't have a portfolio that could achieve what I wanted most - being accepted into the university of my choice where I could excel. I needed to go back to the drawing board, as it were, literally. Learn new ways of doing things, look at things from another angle. The

'failure' was, in hindsight, the best thing that could have happened. Take stock and learn to accept the lesson and most importantly grow from the learning. It doesn't happen very often in my business today, but there are still times that the creative designs don't hit the mark and I have to start again. I always look at where I could better improve a procedure, look at getting better answers to a brief, so I can clearly understand the direction the project needs to go. Again, I've been blessed with beautiful clients, they work with me until we get an awesome outcome they love.

5. Never assume you have all the answers. Always look for another way of doing things. If I learnt anything from my failure, it's that I've become very resourceful in finding other solutions to a problem when the most obvious answer isn't possible. There have been many times where I've had to dig deep and look for a solution I would never have thought of. The nerd in me relishes it when this alternative solution comes to life. I've been able to solve a puzzle and it worked out better than I thought.
6. But above all, be grateful. I am truly blessed with a supportive husband, kids, family, and clients. Without them I wouldn't be the 'successful' business owner that I am now. I have clients I absolutely love working with. I've got projects that inspire me and make my heart sing, I LOVE what I do and the best of all, I get paid for it.

Success to me, is all of the little things that sync up to make life.

At the time of writing this chapter, life was travelling along its normal course, but March 2020 saw the COVID-19 pandemic impact the whole world. I had gone from celebrating 10 years as a successful business owner, to my business disappearing through no fault of my own, right before my eyes. I know I wasn't alone in this new and scary world we found ourselves in.

The heartache of no longer being in business or having an income to support my family threw me into a tailspin. It felt like I had completely failed. I couldn't see a way through this. How were we going to put food on the table? The bills were still coming in, but there was no income to pay them.

I went into a black hole and I couldn't find a way to get out of it. The panic attacks and heart palpitations were enough to think I was going to have a heart attack. The number of tears I cried was unbelievable and in amongst it all, I'd lost my identity. I didn't know who I was anymore.

But here's what I learnt from these dark times.

Through the loving support and strength of my husband, I was able to surrender to 'God / the Universe / put in whatever word works for you'. I let go of my ego and put my faith in a higher source to see me through. I had to let go of my perceived control of things.

People who know me very well, know that I struggle to let people help me, as I can take on a lot and usually help everyone else before myself. In my darkest hour, I let go and allowed people to support me.

I found myself working with gorgeous mentors that helped me with my mental health. Small jobs popped up from my beautiful clients who still had work.

A dear friend who wasn't impacted by the virus loaned us some money so we could get through the following month. I was being helped.

Success doesn't come from the money in the bank; COVID-19 proved that to me. It comes from beautiful people around you being there for you, from the relationships we've built and the trust we've developed in ourselves and others. We're not through it yet, but there's an optimism that lightens my steps as I remember all of my lessons that I've shared with you here, and truly being grateful for any struggles that come my way as I can learn and grow from it.

REDEFINING BUSINESS SUCCESS



THE EMOTIONAL SELF

“Make energising decisions.
Decide who gets to experience
connectedness with you”

DONNA SULJA



Donna Sulja



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Donna Sulja is well known for being steadfast in her Holistic Counselling practice, where she further supports her clients by having trained extensively in both Mastery and Transformational Coaching. Prior to this, Donna worked in a family owned real estate company for 10 years. This massive career shift resulted from Donna wanting to make a meaningful impact in the lives of women, after experiencing quite a turbulent time in her own life, which initiated her own massive personal transformation. Donna now seeks to do the same for other women, helping them to discover choices around their own potential limiting beliefs and overcoming them to then move forward in living a life defined by their own standards. Donna encourages them to start making empowering conscious choices for a life that is self-designed and heart driven.

Donna has had the pleasure of working with women from vastly different backgrounds, various occupations and beliefs. Working with many different presenting needs, from women struggling to keep a roof over their head to entrepreneurs in the fast lane expanding their businesses, where the end goal is the same - personal healing and empowerment. Donna thrives in helping women overcome their present limitations, be it emotional pain, anxiety, relationship issues or breakdowns, health concerns, loss of identity, depression, communication barriers or traumas amid many other issues. Seeing her clients thrive and making lasting changes in their lives is an incredible honour for Donna, it's this and also keenly knowing how valuable and life enhancing many of her modalities are for her clients that prompted her to start writing about the benefits people can experience.

She has been writing with a deep sense of enthusiasm and desire to support readers to be able to empower themselves, which is her strongest professional passion - **empowering woman to empower themselves.** Previously, as the founder of Goddess Energy, Donna ran 1 on 1 sessions as well as many group sessions for both men and women, with a strong focus on resolving emotional trauma. Being holistic in nature, Donna's approach encompassed the entire life experience of her clients, enabling them to experience lasting improvements in their healing journey due to her self-empowerment based process and the development of new and healthier ways of showing up for themselves.

Donna is now a woman focused Holistic Counsellor and Coach, where she helps women create conscious and lasting change, heal emotional pain and experience personal liberation by disrupting old patterns in their limiting beliefs and generating truly inspiring habits for a full and compelling life experience. Donna is currently working on her first book, due to be published late 2021 and has many coaching/holistic counselling programs on offer, including 1 on 1 sessions, group programs and retreats. Donna lives in Melbourne, Australia with her husband Paul and son Dylan.

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- Certified Life Coach
- Certified Mastery Coach
- Certified Transformational Coach
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- Timeline Therapy
- Sound Bowl Healing Level 1 & 2
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REDEFINING BUSINESS SUCCESS

Standards with Soul

BY DONNA SULJA

My hands are usually icy cold, so pausing to wrap them around my cup of steaming hot decaf coffee in between typing this is a soothing comfort, a sweet time and space spent in reflection and contemplation. Ever since I can remember, the business world has fascinated me, and this fascination has only heightened over the past ten years with all of the options now available connecting us globally. For 21 years now, business growth and mindset development has been an ongoing focus of mine and still is today. In one form or another, I've been involved in training since the age of 18, continuously learning more business techniques, which can be both stressful and thrilling for me! It is also an experience layered with extra enthusiasm knowing I am able to pass golden insights on to my clients and colleagues.

It wasn't always this clear or exciting. Many moons ago I remember having what felt like a magical light bulb moment when first deciding my career path would be to become a counsellor. I had been reflecting how regularly many of my high school friends turned to me for support, advice or to share their secrets. And whilst at that stage in my life, it could at times be quite stressful,

it felt very natural, as I mostly felt honoured to be trusted by them. It wasn't until I was in my 30s that I pursued counselling as a career, and by then I had more clarity regarding how I specifically wanted to support people. I decided against becoming a clinical counsellor, instead choosing the holistic approach which simply means the counselling I provide encompasses all aspects of my clients, meaning their minds, body, behaviour and spirit. I found this approach was more congruent with my own way of life. After five years of training in both Holistic Counselling and master's level coaching, I decided to work from my home office, which is where I would say my greatest success story stems from.

Establishing this opportunity in my home has allowed me to entwine all areas of my life without compartmentalising any aspect. It has given me a place where both work and leisure can frequently move together like a harmonizing dance, one I am proud to call my own. I will always remember how, years ago, I was required to clock in and out of work and that dreaded feeling of nausea that came with it. Even whilst I was working for my family business, it still did not feel like the success I was personally longing to experience. Business success for me is a life where you are running a profitable enterprise with integrity and high values, as well as showing up to meet your financial commitments. However, success feels vastly different when you are also running your enterprise **by your own set of consciously set standards and boundaries.**

The expression of this value means I choose not to pigeonhole the various parts of my life and the freedom this consciously chosen boundary provides me with is the definition of my own personal business success. Where at one time this way of functioning was purely a desire, it is now my reality. One I get to experience every day, thanks to many years of implementing and reimplementing my own standards and boundaries. Honestly, at first this wasn't natural or at all easy.

I didn't have a formula or someone to show me the steps, so step by step I created them. Through vastly different portals, many of the professional lessons have been learnt, often through countless hours of working through my own healing, working with and intently listening to my clients and colleagues or in professional training. However, while many of those experiences have been undeniably transformational, the most significant changes to my business practices come from my own personal life lessons, as I have consciously evolved into who I am today and these form the basis of what I can now share within my working arena. The greatest success I have ever generated for my family and myself is by creating the circumstances that allow me to experience both my personal and professional life in my own uniquely chosen way. I now gratefully choose how I live, work and show up. I am attracting my tribe according to my authenticity. **Therefore, my business story begins exactly how it will end, very personally...**

Watch and Learn

Growing up in the '80s I was a real 'Vegemite kid', a happy-go-lucky-type of girl. Along with my three beautiful and uniquely different older sisters, I was raised by my mum. She is a very strong-willed woman and one I admire for many reasons, none more so than for her backbone and love. Like the majority of kids of our generation, we spent most of our time outside, where the wild sunflowers in our backyard left a lifelong impression on me. As I grew into late childhood, I developed a strong respect for my schoolteachers and highly admired three qualities in particular - **skill, intellect** and **beauty**. My grade 5 teacher, Mrs. Moore, possessed them all. My 11 year old self had dwindling self-worth, but I masked it well with my never-failing smile. I had a deep inner belief that I wasn't smart like the other kids. Instead, I focused on what I believed to be my superpower; the ability to make people happy. By the time I grew into my teens, I had allowed so many tiny, yet fundamental incidents to occur in my life that over time I felt squashed-up inside of myself. Pleasing others had become especially important to me. What I didn't understand at the time was that I felt a sense of purposelessness.

By the time I was 13 years old, I had experienced many incidences of inappropriate behaviour from both boys and men, in particular a life-altering one where I was sexually abused. This was when my self-esteem reached an all-time low. At 15 I had many friends but also felt extremely disconnected, when I met the most intelligent man I had ever known. His name was Sanjeewa. We developed a strong friendship where, for the first time, I felt capable of being someone

remarkable and making a difference in this world. I felt heard, valued and understood. I loved and respected this beautiful, intelligent friend of mine and was grateful for his company and in sharing in his views which helped in my developing within myself the gift of self-worth. We became a couple right after my 18th birthday and married two years later. I felt I was now living my life with a sense of purpose.

We were absolutely devoted to each other and our dreams. We were building a business and I was completely immersed in and thrilled by it all. I loved being absorbed in our mission. Life was full of endeavour and often tiring, initially with rewards which only came slowly. But we kept working towards the bigger picture where I was learning grit and grace, which is clearly not something that can be handed to you. I was grateful to be a part of something of real value. I was feeling proud of my husband, of the life we were creating, and mercifully, proud of myself.

After a few years of working alongside each other, through my deep yearning for a child, I started working in early childcare, soon being promoted as a mother craft nurse and running the nursery room full time. At night, I was continuing to train in early childhood development and also working in our New Homes company on the weekends. It was these early years together that were fundamentally crucial for my lifelong business mindset, where with great pride and awe I watched Sanjeewa, who was relentless in maintaining his high standards, a value which I then emulated. He always displayed such high integrity in all his work dealings and expressed genuine compassion and generosity with his clients.

Regardless of their display of integrity or lack thereof, he worked tirelessly to ensure they were satisfied with their experience of both the building process and of him. From those ten years together, the main professional lesson I learnt is, the importance of building healthy relationships and keeping things simple. This vital lesson has become one of my business paradigms and has served me well in all areas of my life both personal and professional.

As Jerry Daley says, 'Anyone can make simple things complicated, the real genius is in making complicated things simple.' Thanks to those years I now choose to keep my life as uncomplicated as possible by being clear with others on my boundaries and strongly encouraging and support my clients in doing the same. I highly value building rapport with people and obtaining trust through honesty, and then taking great care not to lose it by truly valuing the other person's individuality and respecting the relationship dynamics. Upon reflection, my time living and working alongside Sanjeeva was very foundational for me, as he was a proud professional and individual, who was politely spoken, highly intelligent and had a serious, yet fun-loving soul. He had this innate ability to make things that seemed complicated amazingly simple and people frequently turned to him for help for this reason. I was blessed to have him as my best friend, husband, and life role model. My time with him was during an exceptionally impressionable stage in my life. He was nearly ten years my senior and I was always ever ready and appreciative to learn the wealth of wisdom he shared.

Within a few years, we were experiencing some highly rewarding success. It was the early 2000s and we were both educated in our fields, had a financially rewarding business with a solid reputation which was frequently featured in the local newspapers (which were actually read in those days!). We also enjoyed a nice home, a grand car, many investment properties, and yearly overseas trips for weeks at a time. I felt for a time that we were comfortable and content in life. However, life is not a list of check boxes where once an item is ticked satisfaction is guaranteed, so with all honesty and respect to my past, by my definition of this stage together, we were not truly successful anymore. We were both grateful in life, only we began to lack deeper inner joy together and over time we became lonely in each other's company. We had love and respect for each other, but as husband and wife our love was gone. By 2009, we had a beautiful son named Dylan who had just turned four, and our marriage was complete.

Developing My Independent Wings

Remember that squashed-up version of me when I was a teenager? Deep down she never fully evolved and flourished. It was only after birthing my son four years earlier, that I started to wake up to how small I had allowed myself to become, by not living life on my own terms and so initially for his sake I started to consciously grow mentally because that's what little ones deserve and then I started to grow for myself. Once this process was in motion, I couldn't ever go back to the restrictive place I had allowed myself to be in.

I was now single and embracing learning a new way of life. I had breathed in the freedom I had known whilst growing up and I was in love with it. I quickly moved into major 'finding myself' mode, training both my mind and body daily. In many ways it was a highly tough time, made harder by the fact that whilst in my marriage, through what I believe were Sanjeeva's good intentions, I hadn't been able to do many things for myself or on my own. This left me with a multitude of things that I had to quickly work out, as I had my beautiful son to raise. I was now privileged to reflect on my own mum's resilience and how she had raised us girls on her own. Remembering her strength made my own journey of learning and implementing new things, in many respects, extremely natural to do.

Initially challenged in many areas, I had walked away from all of our assets with only a small amount of money from our home we sold. This was a really confronting time, where resilience was my only option. Guilt was my breakfast, lunch and dinner. Guilt for putting my need for freedom in front of my son's need for his parents to be together. Guilt for the stability he'd had with our family lifestyle together. But by far I felt the most guilt for the potential psychological damage I might have been causing him by choosing to tear our family apart. My beautiful son was clearly struggling with the loss and this completely tore me up inside in those early years. I placed him in child counselling and I trained in how to support young children through parental separation. In our spare time we played games all night long and read every book we owned, which was a lot of books! Our new local park felt magical as we ran after each other,

and I watched him squeal and squirm with all of his imaginative games. We were both healing and growing together. Just like when he was born, Dylan was my saving grace yet again, as I had to raise myself up even further for him.

As fate would have it, a conversation with my sister Amanda led me to the path I am on today in my Holistic Counselling and Coaching business. One day, in a heartfelt conversation we shared in her beautifully lit home office, my thought patterns were disrupted and I made a conscious mindset shift, after she advised me to **question everything**. This created a profound shift within my every cell. I was instantly empowered by this notion, in a way of no return. Applying it straight away, questioning what I was being told became 'the way'. I also asked myself profound questions like; 'Is the meaning of life, life itself?', 'Why not me?' and 'If thoughts become things, how will I now decide to create our own beautiful life?' For the first time in my adult life, decisions were now solely mine to make. I was developing my invisible wings, and life was starting to feel natural again.

It was three months after my 30th birthday, in August 2011 that Sanjeewa passed away tragically. The pain of this news felt like the earth had fallen away beneath me. Nothing made sense and I didn't want to break the news to my 6-year-old son, disturbing his innocent heart. Although Dylan only spent one night a week away from me, I still experienced acute shock at being left in a whirlwind of completely single parenting. In the two and a half years after our marriage ended, Sanjeewa and I had remained gentle, respectful and loving towards one another, often speaking about Dylan and collaborating

on ideas to ensure his wellbeing. Even with a slight disconnect in our friendship, we had never allowed anything to interfere with Dylan's healthy, happy life. Now, I had lost the other half of this beautiful stability we had carefully set up for Dylan - suddenly it really was all on me. And the man I had admired for exactly half of my lifetime was gone. He was the guy who had all the answers and the heart to back it up. He was dependable and solidly a good person to know and to love.

Now I was truly on my own, I swiftly went back to what I knew best; I studied! I studied every book I could find on grief, on raising kids alone, single mums, anything and everything relevant, I consumed it. I researched exactly how to break the news to your young child through the shock and pain of my own grief in two days, before arranging to tell our son.

I called up professionals and listened to anyone I thought had a sound advice, and mostly their advice was helpful. But I already had what I needed all along, within me. Things I could never find in any book. For this sweet and brilliant six-year-old boy of mine, I had pure grit and grace dwelling within my soul, I had intellect stirring inside my brain, I had many acquired skills to back us with, I had a strong and eager mindset, and I was empathic. I had my intuition, self-trust and inner belief and by now I was also a great decision maker. I was highly creative, I was a quick thinker and learner, and I was responsible, courageous and self-aware. All incredible qualities to have, but one thing I had that I knew would pull us through is, I had, and will always

have, an undying and unconditional love for my son and a *profound willingness to do whatever it takes* to ensure not only his well-being but that his unique inner joy needs are met. Getting to this place within myself had taken a great deal of conscious effort and self-discipline and I had made plenty of poor decisions along the way.

In those two and a half years I had had two semi long-term relationships. The first man I met, I had lessons to learn from him and I did. It was meant to emotionally hurt, in order to allow me to move on and start my healing process. I will always be grateful for the time we had together. Many years later, upon reflection, the life changing lesson I took on from that point forward was to **honestly live my life on my own terms**. The second relationship invited my more vulnerable side to come out again; he freely and very beautifully loved me enough to soften some fast-growing edges around my heart. I trusted men despite certain betrayals. I am gratefully aware that time we spent together was divinely designed. He brought into our world playfulness and laughter and great family values of togetherness and inclusion. He was a devoted father to his children. Our time together really opened me **to confidently accept more love for myself, including from myself**.

Nine months after Dylan lost his biological father, life still felt unbearable. Yet it was also sprinkled with some blessings. I was training my body and mind vigorously for a new career path, when unbeknownst to me, I walked the love of my life. Paul was, fortunately, also a conscious life learner with a strong ambition to grow in business.

I still had a lot of healing to process, and the healing is still not complete today. After meeting him I was slow to introduce him to Dylan, however, fast-forward us to a year and a half later, and we were all living as one. Fast-forward again and we have now been married since 2015, where together and individually we have realised many of both our professional and personal goals, with far more on our horizon.

Freedom to Fly

I'm now experiencing complete transformation in this phase of my life, working gratefully to experience a life of my own choosing, whilst collaborating with my beautiful husband. This is allowing us to both have the opportunity to live and love through our lives by honouring one another with our own individuality. Paul and I have a company called Diamond Homes Construction, which in the early days was quite trying, and highly stretching, with both of us doing things that were way out of our comfort zones. Over time my involvement within it has decreased significantly, whereas Paul has expanded and prospered. Being married to someone I admire is imperative for me. Whilst he has continued to succeed in his professional growth with Diamond Homes Constructions, including opening up a factory for his own manufacturing business, I have enjoyed career growth by switching industries to pursue my passion in enabling women to empower themselves. With both of us realising our ideal careers, it offers us the chance to experience a heightened sense of purpose and belonging.

We are still ever-growing, on a mission both together and individually, so we each understand the unique demands and the level of energy required to wholly commit to our work responsibilities. Paul is a man unlike any I have ever met; he innately sets my soul free. It was important to me if I were to ever fall in love again that he was not an antagonistic person. He had to be a genuinely loving, kind, self-motivated and loyal man. I am the happiest I have ever been in my entire life and while we are not perfect, for my standards we do have a successful relationship.

As we are soulfully joyous together, we own our mistakes and freely apologise. I do not expect him to make me happy; I own that responsibility, so when he does bring me joy it's a sweet bonus. We frequently laugh and joke about together and actively listen to one another, taking the time to consider the other's needs before sharing our own opinions - admittedly he does this better than I do! We are always creating new adventures, with our upcoming one being our next home, which we will soon own and build. I'm sure this will both challenge us and provide us with an exciting journey.

Things change, the unexpected can quickly appear, so we remain flexible. With both of us running our own businesses, being flexible helps us to decrease our resistance to change and allows us to live harmoniously and happily. Our marriage has taught me many key foundations in life and while I have plenty more to learn, in my marriage, in my business, and in life itself. I am ever ready and eager to apply each and every lesson as they arise. I'm thirsty for more and humbled by it all.

Habit change paradigm shift

I choose to be grateful for where I am, no matter what the experience is, and to be curious about where I am going and ever preparing for the unexpected. I'm living by Zig Ziglar's philosophy of "Success occurs when opportunity meets preparation." I take so much delight in helping women achieve and personally develop, by supporting them to heal their own subconscious mindset blocks, clearing old patterns of limiting beliefs and in doing so creating inspiring new and healthy habits, just as I have. To help them rise after experiencing significant loss and supporting them in transitioning into a new way of life is very satisfying. I have had the pleasure of being a part of many life changing experiences for so many glorious women. One in particular is a very remarkable businesswoman, who is soon be achieving her 6-figure business goal. I had the pleasure of supporting her to get back in touch with her physical and mental health and in building back up her energy and confidence, in order to re-launch her incredible and much needed business, from which many individuals, plus the business community in Melbourne, benefits.

One of the biggest privileges I get to experience is helping women reclaim or to discover for the first time their own self-empowerment. We achieve this through healing their belief systems, helping them take total responsibility for where they are now and preparing them for where they want to be through a habit change paradigm shift, with how we view the world and ourselves.

Specific Ecology Checks

Main purposes of paying attention to your own Ecology:

- To anticipate future loss or other difficulty with processing the change.
- To bring yourself into a place of greater appreciation of your present state.

There is ALWAYS a positive intention behind a person not having the change which they say they want.

Questions to consider, in no particular order -

1. "Are you aware of any problems or difficulties that might happen if you raised your standards and went on to experience what you are wanting right now?"
2. "Does any part of you have any objection to having this experience?" (Pay attention to any of your unconscious signals – twitching, shortness of breath, heart rhythm, tearing eyes, choked throat...)
3. "What has stopped you from having this change in the past?" or "What would you have lost or what difficulties would you have encountered if you had made this change back then?"
4. (After you have clearly identified for yourself your desired experience.) "Notice as you try out these new behaviours in your imagination, what you will lose if you get this new behavioural choice? Is there anything you don't like about the new choice or its consequences?"

5. Attempt to take the point of view of the significant other people in your life responding to the change. "How will this affect others?"
6. "If someone else was to experience this – not you, but someone like you – how could it get in his/her way or cause problems? What kind of challenges might that person find themselves facing?"
7. Role-play: I encourage you to actively role-play the new behaviour in different major life contexts (work, home, play etc.) and with significant people (husband, wife, boss, children, etc.) so you both can observe it and evaluate how it could be a problem.
8. "As if" frame: "Now imagine yourself (3 months, 6 months, 1 year) in the future, looking back on having already used the new behaviour, noticing how the new choice has worked, noticing other changes that were required to accommodate the new experience, other changes it has resulted in, etc." Paying attention to your current habitual behaviours, keep the following sequence in mind. (e.g.- it could be your eating habit, or desire to say no, etc.)

Triggering Thoughts, Feelings & Actions:

Step One: There is an external sensory trigger that cues the brain.

Step Two: The trigger prompts a thought (a mental picture or internal dialogue with meaning).

Step Three: The thought prompts a feeling (a positive or negative physiological response in the body).

Step Four: The feeling prompts a behaviour.

Step Five: The strategy completes with a comparison test. The test compares which behaviour stopping or continuing *gives you a better feeling*, when you have the best feeling you can get from the behaviour, then you stop and exit the sequence.

Think of something that you wanted to do that you didn't do. It turns out that not doing it felt better than doing it. Now, by contrast, I invite you to think about something that other people struggle with that you have discipline and will-power about, and those other people don't. You don't do it because you have discipline and will-power, **you do it because you've arranged to have a positive feeling from doing the thing vs. not doing the thing and those other people have not yet arranged to have a positive feeling.**

How we set up strategies to do that is what we want to look at. There's actually no such thing as willpower; there's only really useful strategies that deliver positive feelings at the right time and place!

High standards vs low standards: a great way to measure these is to consider - do you have any goals you passionately want to achieve? If this hasn't been your experience as yet, it's likely that in order to achieve these goals you'll need to first raise your personal standards even more in specific areas of your life.

Every goal you set has a specific objective which comes with a variety of requirements that needs to be met. These requirements are reflected in the personal standards you uphold in relation to that goal.

No matter what it is, you'll need to first meet those requirements.

Interestingly, when you set high standards you immediately raise your expectations of what's possible for yourself, where you start to expect more from yourself, your actions, and from others. With a higher set of expectations, you are naturally willing to do more to get the results you are after, *which subsequently raises your standards of performance in all areas of your life.* And I find this very exciting!

This is why 'Redefining Business Success' for me is about living my whole life in all areas through my own values and standards and living life defined by my own terms. Authentically living, which is what I share with my clients. For them to be vulnerable with themselves and others when necessary, to stay committed to their clearly defined goals and seek the clarity they are needing to move forward with more ease and flow. *"I am autonomous in living life by my own conscious choices and take full responsibility for those choices."* To me that is the definition of both professional and personal success and what I passionately work with my own clients to achieve.

So why the long personal story in a business book?

Simply, that I believe we cannot compartmentalise our lives. When you unite the professional and the personal together, it's purely who you are and that's the definition of success for me. This way work can become pleasurable, home life can become pleasurable and life is your stage to create your greatest expression; you. It's satisfying, challenging and it gets messy, yet the sunflowers still bloom.

So how about you? Do you want to create something new for your life? Do you want to surround yourself with people who see and point out the greatness within you and who ask you life empowering questions, seeking new perspectives to explore?

I encourage you to seek your own cheerleader, be one in return, and to ponder on the following:

Our closest people have a strong influence on our decisions and it's our precious **decisions** that affect our **experiences** which then affect our **behaviour**, which becomes our **habits** which then creates our **beliefs**, they then create our **identity** *and how we perceive the world!*

Our Unique Paradigm. That is an enormously powerful formula of which to be mindful. Take the time to consider 'Who are the five closest people in your life, and do they energize or deplete you?'

I suggest starting by making energising decisions. Deciding who gets to experience connectedness with you is one of the biggest decisions you will ever make. I believe these words are with you now for a divine reason, so I encourage you to trust your natural born instincts, to live by your own standards and pursue your own dreams. And remember to take time to water the flowers, as together, you will bloom.



THE LEGACY SELF

“It’s not about you. It’s about making the world a better place because of what you and your business can achieve”

GREG ROWORTH



Greg Roworth



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Roworth has been dubbed Australia's #1 business growth strategist for owners of professional service firms and is the author of **'Run Your Business on Autopilot - How to Leverage Your Business for Maximum Profit in Minimum Time'** and also **'Cracking the Code - How to Break Free From Being Stuck In The Centre of Your Business, to Growing Your Business At The Strategic Level.'**

He is the director of Business Flightpath, and specialises in assisting smart but frustrated professional business owners to discover their unique market positioning and to quickly leverage their business, by attracting more ideal clients and building the systems to run their businesses on autopilot.

Greg has started, grown and sold five businesses of his own. He has also worked with hundreds of small business owners, helping them break through growth barriers to make their businesses work, instead of owners having to make them work. Greg has worked as a CPA, a Chartered Accountant, a consultant and a mentor both in the accountancy field and for other professional service firms.

Greg has been providing consultation and support for business owners now for more than 25 years assisting clients across Australia and New Zealand as well as the UK. During this time, Greg has also been recruited by one of the Big 4 accountancy firms, helping them develop their growth strategies.

His academic qualifications include a BBus and an MBA, but Greg says his greatest source of education about business has come from literally getting down and dirty, working in the trenches in his first business in the irrigation industry, and all of the lessons learnt since in overcoming the challenges he faced growing each of his businesses.

Download a copy of Greg's books and other resources for free by following the links provided below.

Cracking the Code:
crackingthecodebook.com.au

Run Your Business on Autopilot:
businessonautopilot.com.au

Everything You've Believed About Marketing
Professional Services is Wrong:
businessflightpath.com/marketing-beliefs/marketing-professional-services/

Learn about Greg's 3 Phase System to attract more
premium clients consistently and predictably:
businessflightpath.com/training

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Your Own Business

- Making a Living, Lifestyle
or Legacy?

BY GREG ROWORTH MBA, BBUS

What were you thinking when you decided to start your own business?

Quite likely, you weren't expecting that you may have to negotiate your way through a world-wide pandemic that would decimate many businesses and create enormous survival-threatening challenges for most others. But the reality is that small businesses face many threats and challenges to their survival even in the best of times. It takes a special type of person with a specific type of focus to not only survive and make a living from their business even through a pandemic, but to also create an enviable lifestyle and a lasting legacy that is possible when you get it right.

Small businesses are the backbone of the Australian economy, employing well over 50% of the workforce. Of the 2.4 million or so businesses in Australia, over 80% employ less than 5 people. The unfortunate reality is that very few of them are truly successful. In fact, the "norm" is for more than 60% of small businesses to fail within the first 3 years of operation and only 5% last longer than 10 years.⁷

7. <https://insidesmallbusiness.com.au/planning-management/why-most-small-businesses-fail-within-the-first-three-years>

The reality is that being in business is hard. Most business start-ups fail after hitting a number of critical challenges along the way.

My first business almost became one of those failures only four years after I started it. Outwardly, I looked like I had succeeded; the business had been grown to support nine employees and had experienced a record sales year. But underneath the surface, the reality was that I was working seventy-hour weeks, hardly seeing my young children, running the business at a loss, and struggling to pay wages. The financial pressure and emotional stress were hurting my family. Like most small business owners, I was good at some things, but I really didn't have much of a clue when it came to managing the finances and managing my people. It was a huge wakeup call when my wife told me what she really thought of me one day, and from that moment I knew things had to change.

I found a mentor who helped me turn things around and eventually I was able to sell that business. This apparent success caused other business owners to approach me, asking for help with their own businesses. I really enjoyed those conversations and because I was keen to help people, I decided to become a business consultant. Since then, I have started, grown and sold four businesses in the accountancy, coaching and consultancy fields and am now assisting owners of various professional service firms to build thriving practices they will be able to sell.

Most business coaches, consultants or advisors won't or can't tell you about the real drivers of business success and how you need to re-orientate your thinking and your beliefs to a different level to achieve it. In this chapter, I want to share what I have learned over the past forty years about true business success and the various challenges that you will have to face, if succeeding in business is your goal.

The Five Critical Challenges

Many entrepreneurs go into business with dreams of success that include wealth, financial independence and the freedom to do whatever they want. There's nothing wrong with those dreams.

However, after being in business for a while and facing the challenges that inevitably come, the reality of how difficult it is to grow a successful business hits. Often, after a time of unsuccessfully trying to break through barriers, many business owners review their goals and opt for staying comfortable, instead of wanting to become wildly wealthy. At this point they generally think that if they just stop trying to grow their business, all the stress of trying to get more customers and having to manage more employees will be avoided. However, very few actually realise how difficult it is to try to keep a business small and equitable, especially if you are any good at what you do. There's a real problem with having a self-serving goal direct your approach to business.

So why do most small business owners fail to achieve the success they dreamed about and end up virtually trapped in their businesses, struggling with long working hours and mediocre results?

From my experience across thousands of small and medium sized businesses, I've found that most businesses are dealing with five critical challenges, or mistakes, that stem from a single fatal flaw that undermines their ability to succeed. Even though this fatal flaw exists in almost every business, and almost everyone knows about it, no one is telling small business owners about it and how to fix it. Even your accountant and business coach aren't warning you about this.

After many years of studying truly successful entrepreneurs, I've come to believe there are some consistent principles they've all adopted, and while most of these successful entrepreneurs worked hard for their success, their success was not due to them working hard in their businesses.

Their successes come down to how they thought about their role as a business owner and the purpose of their business differently from everyone else.

Let's examine the five critical challenges that business owners need to deal with.

1. Short Term Focus on the Urgent Instead of the Important Most owners of SMEs (small to medium enterprises) are more focused on short-term survival than long term plans. Typically, they have no clear long-term direction and their short-term cash requirements drive most things that happen in the

business. Consequently, the future development needs are often totally neglected and most business owners spend much of their time putting out fires.

- 2. Reactive Marketing** Usually SMEs have no defined marketing plan so marketing decisions are often determined reactively, depending on how busy things are. Advertising is initiated when sales slow and stopped when sales pick up. Marketing is usually tactical rather than strategic. This endless reactive cycle tends to keep a business operating by achieving around the same level of sales – a self-serving survival level. That is until something unexpected, for example, a pandemic, comes along and wipes them out.
- 3. Ineffective Delegation** You can't grow your business without delegating work. Often, however, the business owner has expectations of employees that are not communicated clearly, and when expectations are unclear, owners don't get the results they want. The resulting frustration leads owners to adopt the false belief that "You can't get good people these days."
- 4. Lack of Control** Running a business without clear performance indicators is like flying blind. Some business operators I've seen don't even know what their financial position is from month to month. That's like guessing how much fuel you have left, then being surprised when the engine stops.

5. Doing it all yourself Business owners tend to believe they should know how to do everything themselves without looking for help. Becoming a top business leader, however, requires a significant degree of personal growth and development of critical skills. Significant achievement always involves getting help from others. Success in business requires effort and leverage and usually is not achieved without a significant amount of mentoring and guidance from people with the right experience and expertise.

What Do You Believe About Success?

The top business owners who achieve what most people would regard as real business success operate according to a set of beliefs around success; principles that are in direct contrast to the beliefs most business owners have.

Here are some of the beliefs I commonly hear expressed by small business owners today.

- Business is hard
- Customers only want the cheapest
- You can't compete against those guys
- You can't get good people these days
- Growing a business is too much of a headache.

For most people, the limiting factor is the lens they see their world through. Our world and our success is shaped by the filters we use to create our reality, which is determined by our mindset and our beliefs. For example, would Sir Richard Branson see the challenges

in your business the same way you do? Do you think your business might have greater chance of success if you had a member of Shark Tank giving you guidance? A different mindset can provide a different perspective which can be the difference between success and failure.

After the global financial crisis in 2008, as the result of some poor investment decisions, I was well over \$100,000 in debt and was researching how to go bankrupt. My family and friends were urging me to get a 'proper job' and not to go into business again. I took that advice on board, but in my heart, I knew it wouldn't work for me. I just needed a different perspective on my position.

Let's look at how different thinking has impacted two businesses you have probably heard of - Starbucks and McDonalds.

Starbucks was founded in 1971 by three partners who were passionate about their coffee business and had achieved a moderate level of success. In 1981, Howard Schultz convinced the original partners to allow him to join the organisation. Schultz wanted to build on the existing base of 4 stores and to change from being a retailer of coffee beans and equipment to a café style operation. But the original owners weren't of the same belief. In 1984, Schultz, with other investors, bought out the original partners and became CEO with a plan to open 125 stores in the next 5 years. Schultz actually exceeded this goal, opening 150 stores in that time. With continued expansion, as of January 2004, there were over 7,600 stores under Starbuck's brand globally.

The founders of Starbucks had a limited vision for what Starbucks could become and their beliefs and mindset restricted the growth that was possible. Schultz demonstrated that even his bold vision could be exceeded when he was allowed to go for it.

The story of McDonalds is quite similar. In 1948 in California, brothers Maurice (Mac) and Richard (Dick) McDonald established their first “fast food” restaurant that was highly systemised and efficient. In the early fifties, they sold two franchises. In 1954, Ray Kroc suggested to the brothers that they franchise their restaurants throughout the country. The brothers were sceptical of success and believed that their style of self-service restaurant wouldn't work in colder climates to the north. They didn't want to risk growth, but Kroc offered to take responsibility for that and bought the rights to expand McDonalds throughout the country. He sold his first franchise in Chicago, one of the coldest places in the US. By 1959 there were 102 new franchises of McDonalds in the US. Kroc's vision for McDonalds was far bigger than the McDonald brothers and as a result, McDonalds is now known as the largest small business in the world.

What was the difference that led these two companies from moderate success to multinational pre-eminence? The limited beliefs of the founders were proven false and their successors' more ambitious beliefs have taken their respective enterprises to worldwide fame and success.

So what beliefs are holding back the growth of your business? Even if your business is moderately successful, are your beliefs preventing you from achieving the ultimate possible success?

I mentioned before some of the common beliefs I hear all the time from small business owners, but what are the beliefs of people like Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, or Anita Roddick? What do these types of people, who have broken through the normal barriers every business owner faces and created ultra-successful enterprises, believe about business?

Richard Branson said, “If you aren’t making a difference in other people’s lives, you shouldn’t be in business.”

Steve Jobs said, “The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

Anita Roddick said, “I want to work for a company that contributes to and is part of the community. I want something not just to invest in, I want something to believe in.”

These statements give us a clue as to their mindset and purpose for being in business. They are not caught up with their own struggle or need for success. They believe in something much bigger.

Mission Driven

In 2011, after moving to Melbourne from New Zealand, I started a new business coaching business and was looking for new coaches to join my team. I was having no success with attracting quality coaches and was frustrated with the people I was talking to. I was beginning to think that “You just can’t find good people these days.”

I went to my mentor for advice and she asked me about my mission.

“I can answer that,” I thought. All good business coaches know that having a vision and mission statement are essential in business.

I got about halfway through my mission statement when she stopped me and said, “That’s your problem, right there. How can you expect to attract quality people when you have such a boring, self-serving mission?” My mission statement back then was rather generic and self-focused. It was all about *my* goals to get out of debt and set *myself* up financially. It said nothing that would inspire anyone else to want to achieve it.

That was the moment everything changed for me. I knew I needed to redefine what success meant.

I did some deep soul searching about what my business was all about and sought to come up with a mission statement that was inspirational, one that would attract excellent coaches who would say, “Yes, I’d love to be part of that,” and attract clients who would say, “Yes, give me some of that!”

My work paid off. What had been a vehicle to fulfil my personal ambitions, I had redefined to be a business that would have a positive impact on many other people’s lives. Instead of the generic, boring statement that I had before, my purpose was now “creating extraordinary businesses.”

Beyond the mission, there was also a vision that saw the business becoming global and having a real worldwide impact. I understood too that my business needed to stand for something, so I also defined a set of values that became central to the way we operated.

Instead of being bogged down by my own challenges, I was now inspired to create something great for others.

This new inspirational purpose led to attracting more clients and some great coaches. I kept studying successful entrepreneurs and clearly saw the reasons for their success. As a result, within a few years, my business grew to the seven-figure level when I was decided it was time to sell it.

The one simple thing the ultra-successful entrepreneurs do differently from the battlers is to have a clear vision for what their business could become and develop an inspirational, impactful mission that attracts both customers and employees to join their cause.

Mission Drives Strategy

The value of an inspiring mission and the strategy that flows from it is primarily the clarity it brings to everyone in the organisation. When the vision and mission are re-orientated from being self-serving to making a contribution and positive impact, people with the same aims and values are inspired to join the cause.

Hugely successful companies, because of the clarity of their mission, communicate effectively about the impact they can have and who that will benefit.

Their mission provides a clarity and direction that stimulates a strategy which is defined and enacted through a plan that their team owns and lives and breathes every day. The companies who thrive live by specific values that guide their behaviour and team decisions in a way that unifies and drives their people to do their best, without having to be “motivated” by a boss.

Clarity about what a business stands for, who it serves, how it serves and who is involved comes from being clear about why that business exists in the first place.

Customers are inspired by the products and services produced because they are relevant and wanted and so demand and price are not an issue. Think of how Apple customers line up around the block to purchase every new product released.

Employees are motivated to work effectively using initiative and intelligence without having to be micro-managed. Look at how Zappos’ employees go above and beyond to look after customers’ needs.⁸

Work is easy to manage because of the simplification of the systems that are in place. Think of McDonalds and how their restaurants are efficiently run by teenagers. The five critical challenges I explored above are obliterated when beliefs are changed and are focused on a clear, inspiring vision and mission for why a business exists and what it intends to contribute.

8. <https://www.zappos.com/about/stories/employee-happiness-amenities>

Beliefs Drive Success

I urge you to redefine your business success by reorienting your beliefs from where they are limiting your impact and making your life challenging, and begin to see that your success is not all about you. You need a bigger vision and mission to inspire you to break through the challenges.

The problem with your self-serving goals and just wanting your business to be the vehicle to your prosperity and freedom is that that limited vision will not be enough to push you through the tough times. You need something more to keep you going when it gets hard. You need a mission that focuses your energy on making sure you give your all because there is too much at stake not to make it happen.

It's not about you. It's about the people who will suffer if your business doesn't provide the solutions they need.

It's not about you. It's about leaving a legacy that goes far beyond you.

It's not about you. It's about making the world a better place because of what you and your business can achieve.

That's the heart centred way that leads to contribution, not confusion. That's true success.

Make it your mission to find a mentor who is able to help you redefine business success, so that your life has true meaning and your heart fulfils its true legacy.



THE VALUED SELF

“Actualising a framework,
including clear objectives and
key results, keeps you on track
and achieving your goals”

CHARITH BANDARA



Charith Bandara



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charith Bandara is a Software Consultant and entrepreneur with several years of experience in Real Estate investing and financial markets.

Charith was born in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, and migrated to Australia a few years ago. He studied for his Master of Information Technology in Sikkim Manipal University, and has a finance background as a former CIMA finalist.

Over his career he has been involved with many Business Systems developments, Web Technologies and Data science projects. He is also interested in projects that focus on issues of personal development, business development and economics.

Charith's journey as an entrepreneur is an interesting one involving many businesses as a consultant and manager, plus experience as a real estate investor. He expends a lot of his resources on these investments and is also involved with real estate development ventures.

Charith's ongoing mission is to help average people leverage effective "How to" tools to achieve financial freedom and create a second income rather than depend on a single income. He believes that everyone, no matter what they do or where they come from, should be able to benefit from the power of the written word in their everyday life.

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From Two Bags to a Property Portfolio

BY CHARITH BANDARA

Growing up in a third world country like Sri Lanka I always heard from my parents, “If you don’t do well in school you will suffer your whole life.” This was always in my mind when I was learning in school. Although I was just an average student in school, I was good enough to qualify as an IT professional in the field of software development. After working a few years in Sri Lanka as a Software Developer, I migrated to Australia as a permanent resident looking for a better life.

Although I had a few years of work experience, I didn’t have anything to show for it, apart from a few dollars, as working in third-world countries the remuneration is much less.

Immediately after migrating to Australia I found a small job in a pizza shop as a delivery driver. After work in the evening I applied for all the job positions in the field of IT. Time passed by and after applying for many jobs, I got an opportunity to work in the IT Industry as a contractor, for a 3-month project.

Going to work in Australia for the first time in a corporate environment was a remarkable and new experience, especially getting used to the slang Australians use when talking! On the very first day they were talking about having “a Cuppa and a Bikki”, having “a good Arvo”, “Grand”! Those were words I’d never experienced before and sometimes I was clueless as to what they were talking about.

Time passed by, and the job went very well. Some of the technical assignments I was doing were much simpler than the jobs in Sri Lanka, but when it came to completing the documentation needed it was much harder and a lot of detail was required.

After the 3-month project was completed I started applying for a few more roles and got another permanent position as a software developer in another corporate environment. Although I had a professional career now, I still kept my part time delivery job to cover my daily expenses.

While I was doing these things, on the weekend I also enrolled with TAFE College to learn a few handyman skills, such as laying tiles, rendering and spray-painting cars.

Paying higher taxes

Working multiple jobs and also learning trade skills is not that easy. Soon I didn’t have any time left for myself just to relax and rest. After June 30, a letter arrived from the ATO saying that I needed to lodge my taxes. For that I had to find a tax accountant as I had no clue how to do it.

Working 5 days a week and also in the evenings, I was working more than 75 hours a week. When the tax time came, my tax accountant said you have to pay back to the ATO an extra \$7,500, because once my income from the first job and second job were combined, I fell into the next tax bracket. I was shocked, as many so-called experts among my family and friends had said this is your first tax return, so usually you will get back everything. Instead I had to pay back extra. After that shock, I stopped taking advice from regular people and started consulting experts instead! I would strongly encourage you to do the same.

After paying my taxes I started reading books about how to reduce tax legally. I found a few good books on how to achieve this and discovered that in order to lower my tax, I needed to get into 'good debt', investment properties and business.

Buying a first property

I had enough savings to buy my first property after eight months in Australia. Property is everyone's dream, but for me, I wanted to be sure I made a good deal and I wanted to make money right from day one. I was looking for a few properties which were below the market value. I found one which was about 50K less than normal market value. This house was structurally sound but it was badly maintained. The smell of the carpet was pretty bad, as too many dogs were in and out of the house.

A few people came to the inspection, but no one wanted to buy it as the smell was so bad. My offer was accepted and then came the second challenge - to get finance for the rest of the purchase price. I had to go through a few banks as I was new to Australia. All the big banks refused. I finally found one small bank and the loan got approved.

Once the finance was approved the next hurdle came; the Property Title was registered with WRIT as the owner didn't pay parking and others fines on time. It took some extra charges to clear the WRIT. I had to have a long discussion between the vendor and my lawyers to get this done; I'd never seen such magnitude of offenses - the document listing them had 72 pages.

I still remember once finance was approved I stepped into the bank to talk with the lending manager, and he asked me when settlement was happening. "Next week," I said.

"That's great," he replied. "I see from your smile that you can almost smell the new house!" he said enthusiastically. I laughed politely, thinking of the actual stench of the house's carpet, but feeling anxious to not show my emotions. "Yes," I said. "I'm so excited."

After buying that initial property, the very first thing I did was to remove all the stinky carpets and prepare a list of the things I had to do. I needed to get the house up to a liveable standard and manage the renovation spend to under 12K, so most of the tasks were done by me. Later, I refinanced the property for an extra \$55,000.

My mission was accomplished! I got back some deposit money and the renovation costs, so the house made money from the beginning. The property consisted of four bedrooms. I rented out two rooms, I lived in one and the other was used for storage. My property expenses were almost covered by this arrangement and I only had to cover \$150 per month to pay the mortgage.

Starting my business

Starting a business was a significant challenge for me as I would have to give up my second job and learning from TAFE if it were to succeed. Research had taught me some important lessons, amongst them; running a business is a great way to make the world better while enhancing yourself, more than half of new businesses fail during the first year, businesses are about making dreams come true for you and for others, and don't ever do anything just for money alone. I was thinking for a few days about the kind of business I could start as I was reading a book by Derek Sivers, and then suddenly I found this;

'Don't be on your eleventh hour someday, squandering your one chance of life, full of regret, because you've been chasing little distractions instead of big ideas. Success stems from persistently improving and inventing, not from persistently promoting what doesn't work. Every time you think you know what your new business is going to do, remember this quote from Steve Blank: "No plan survives first contact with customers."'

Time passed by and I did start my very first business, buying second-hand cars, fixing them up with new paint and selling them for a few dollars. Although I was doing ok with a few vehicles working just part time the business didn't last long, and I was about to experience the biggest shock of my life.

Tough times in Queensland, Moving to Melbourne.

On Monday morning I went to work as normal in my IT job. My manager assigned me work as usual, and around 10:30 am I got an email from my manager saying, 'We have a meeting with the Director.' I duly went to the meeting, and there were about 30 people in the room. I still remember his words; "We have lost our biggest client and unfortunately we have to let a few people go." I was one of them, along with another 32 people. They paid three months' salary in advance and that was it, I was out of the office by 11:30 am. I was truly shocked and had no idea what to do, as all this happened so fast.

Time passed by. I was applying for a few IT jobs, but didn't get any, so I committed to a few more shifts in pizza shops as a delivery driver but it was very tough finding work anywhere after the GFC hit Queensland. I started applying for interstate roles, had a few interviews online and then one job offered me a permanent position. They asked me to fly to Melbourne and gave me a job offer. So a week later, I had to pack my bags and had a big drive to Melbourne from Queensland - over 2,700 km via Sydney. Melbourne is a vibrant city with so many opportunities.

Initially, I was thinking about selling my property back in Queensland, but instead I rented it out for more than the outgoings, and met with an accountant who gave me advice on how to get tax back via PAYG variation and through depreciation. Not only was I then getting some money from rent and outgoings, I was getting money back from tax, too. What a change from a few years ago when I was hit with that enormous tax bill! I realised that applied knowledge equals wisdom.

Renovation deals, flipping houses and land

I thought I could do more renovation projects and flipping houses in Melbourne like I had in Queensland, but the Melbourne housing market is quite different to the Brisbane market so I started following local property experts such as Steve McKnight and John Lindeman.

I was on a good income, I could service debt bigger than what I could afford before, and I had my three months' worth of salary from my previous redundancy. So rather than buying a house to live in I went to negotiate my very first property deal in Melbourne. I bought two vacant pieces of land to get titled in an up and coming area and paid \$7,500 each. It took three months to get the titles for the new lands. After receiving those titles, I sold one of the pieces of land for more than \$40K than I originally paid because the land prices in that area began going up at a rapid pace as proposed infrastructure projects were announced. I used the money from that sale as a deposit to build a house on the other piece of land.

So technically I didn't have to put up any money out of my pocket to construct the house I was building; it was all funded by the land sale and the bank. After building was completed, I rented out that property. This was my second no-money-down deal.

I have learned a lot about buying and developing properties and believe that this is my future business as I can do deals without any of my own money. After completing many transactions, I still continue to use this strategy with great success.

Unusual property deals

Many property deals are done in different ways. I've always wanted to do deals using 100% other people's money and have come to understand the unique opportunities that can be provided by undertaking a joint venture project.

For example, recently one of my friends was laid off from his job and couldn't find any alternative employment. He had already been paying his mortgage for more than 10 years, and his house value would be more than \$500K if the property had been in good condition. Sadly, because things were not up to scratch, when he tried to sell he only received offers of around \$350K. To do the necessary renovations would cost around \$25K - \$30K. To settle the bank debt he needed at least \$400,000 from the sale. Even if he sells the house for full price, if he sells it without renovations he cannot pay the mortgage off.

I got involved as a joint venture with this project to save my friend from going bad on his credit and also to make money myself. The agreement was that he would vacate the property immediately, I would take over paying the mortgage for the next 6 months, complete the renovation and sell the property, all within that 6 month timeframe. Then he would get \$405,000 allowing him to pay off his mortgage and make some money and I would keep the remaining profit.

I registered the caveat in the property title with the condition that he cannot sell the property himself, with a debt of \$100K to promise to build a house and sell it. Once I registered for the property I started paying the mortgage and made a plan for the renovation. I applied for a loan from the bank with project finance of \$50K as a renovation loan, enough to cover the renovation and mortgage payments for 6 months.

So I did the cosmetic renovation with a few builders and contractors and managed to finish within 3 months, advertising the property to sell for a reserve price of \$525K. The property was looking really good! It went to auction and sold for the price of \$530K. The property was still under my friends name as this was his property he had lived in, so we didn't have to pay any capital gains. I ended up paying \$410K to my friend, \$5K more than the original price we agreed upon and I ended up making \$52K after agent commission, business tax, bank interest and other costs. Not bad for a 3-4 month's part time deal without putting in a single penny from me and using 100% other people's money.

Starting a few other businesses

My motive for starting a few more businesses is to give more people job opportunities, but I have zero capability for running business. So I look for people who can run small businesses who can partner with me who are efficient and capable of running the business. During this process I met a few potential partners. So I started a few businesses, one after the other - some are still holding up OK but some partners cheated me and I learned a lot from them too.

Here are some that are currently operating:

- Cleaning business
- Online product selling (eBay and Amazon)
- Catering business
- Stock market investing
- Consulting for other businesses

I learned a lot of lessons from doing business and property deals. Here are some of the lessons I learned about business success and resilience.

Critical Lessons Learnt

Sometimes I wonder why children are sent to school. To learn, obviously, you might say. Schools follow a syllabus given by the government or expert academics, but I believe that everything they teach in school can be learned from a book. Most of my success in business and property deals has come from reading books and then applying what I learn in real life. *Books can be your best teachers.*

School can be incredibly competitive. Students vie for grades, compete in sports and also strive for their teacher's attention. Unfortunately, nothing can prepare you for the level of competition you will face when you enter 'real life' after school. As technology becomes more advanced, the globe is shrinking, meaning that the rivalry is actually increasing. But it's important to remember that in the real world you need to cooperate with others to achieve success. Rather than functioning as an individual, *you need to learn to be a team player.*

You will know the familiar phrase, "The more you give, the more you get." Giving is a crucial part of the customer experience. Customers enjoy feeling that they are receiving value and great service from you, and when they do they give back by spending their money with you. So, what can you give away that your customers will appreciate? If you focus on giving to your customers, the Law of Attraction says you will draw more customers to you, which will only benefit your business. Remember, *"The more you give, the more you get."*

Price is an important element when you are in business. Even if something is affordable, it doesn't mean it's worthwhile. I choose to buy value. Customers will pay more for something which they value. If I don't like the price, I simply ignore it because if the seller genuinely wants to sell, he will negotiate a better price. If I feel what I am buying is of value, I'll pay the price. *Cheap isn't always best, buying for value means the cost will be worth it.*

To become a genuine entrepreneur, you need to ensure that you could leave for a year from your work, and when you returned, your business would continue to have improved while you were away. There are plenty of things you can do to delegate tasks and empower others to work your business for you. As the old saying goes, “You can’t be chief cook and bottle washer.” Trust and delegate, but verify as well. Give people room to get things done without constantly looking over their shoulder, but do make sure to double-check the work now and again.

Constantly multi-tasking will only keep you busy but is not really effective. Instead, if you focus carefully on each task, and put everything you have into each job you undertake, you will not only complete things well but also maximise your profitability and productivity. Every Sunday evening create an activity list for your week so you can get straight down to business Monday morning. I generally start my plan for each day with action words that give me extra inspiration, such as, ‘*assess choices*’ ‘*generate possibilities for*’ and even ‘*go live with.*’ Make a rundown list of one to three vital things you should achieve today and do those first. Ask yourself, ‘What is the most remarkable and best use of my time today?’ It can be tempting to simply work and mark tasks off a run sheet, yet that work frequently is not comprised of the tasks that will get you closer to your bigger objectives and the long-term results you’re trying to achieve. *For your business to succeed you need to make wise choices about where you invest your time.*

I don't like wasting my time and sitting around. I've discovered that by actualising a framework, including clear objectives and key results, I stay on track and achieve my goals. Having a clear framework also ensures my whole organisation can correctly discern what the most significant tasks to be dealing with are, and guarantees the efficient and smooth running of the business. *Clear and quantifiable achievements keeps you and your business concentrated on the correct things and is crucial for you to succeed.*

Emlyn Scott said, 'It is necessary to use leverage if you want to become wealthy. Two of the most common form of Leverage are OPT (Other People's time) and OPM (Other People's Money).' Scott explains further and gives the example; "If you saved \$20K per year and borrowed 90%, after one year you could buy an investment property that cost \$200K. If you saved up all the money by yourself, to raise \$200K would take you 10 years, by which time the cost of the property would have risen much higher.' You may believe that 'you need money to make money.' However, it doesn't necessarily need to be your money. *OPM and borrowing allows you to accelerate your wealth creation using other people's money.*

Remember the saying 'You can't be chief cook and bottlewasher'? I have a bookkeeper, legal advisors, asset protection experts, a contract specialist, etc. and use every one of these individuals for their expertise. They save me money because their knowledge frees up my time to make more money. I can't be an expert on everything. I learned the hard way with my unexpected tax bill that *it's smarter to hire professionals for expert tasks.*

Taxes can be either the biggest disadvantage or the strongest incentive available to you for the creation of wealth. I always wondered how US President Donald Trump or Jeff Bezos pay nothing in taxes. Amazon earns so much money but pays nothing in taxes.

“If you want to change your tax, you have to change your facts.” - Tom Wheelwright, CPA

Tax law is created to give a set of benefits or incentives for certain kinds of behaviour, mainly creating wealth and jobs. Employees and self-employed people, while providing value to employers, don't themselves provide jobs or wealth for society. Investors and business owners mainly do that. ' 50% of all income tax in Australia is paid by 10% of the working population,' said former Federal Treasurer Joe Hockey, in an interview with Fran Kelly on ABC RN Breakfast, July 27, 2015.

One of the biggest differences is that companies pay taxes on profit, whereas individuals pay taxes on income.

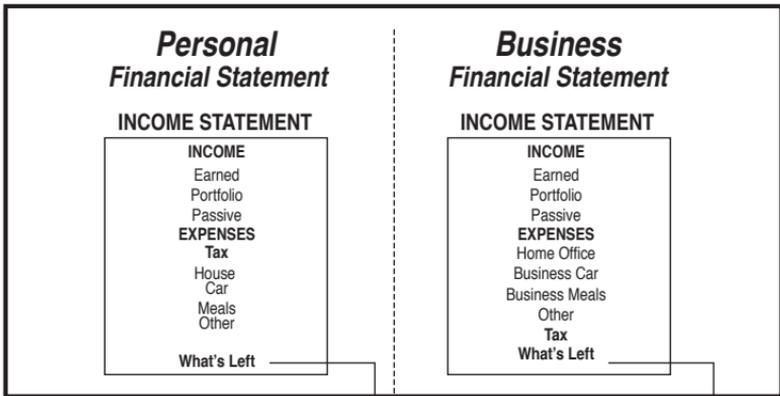


Diagram credit: Loopholes of the Rich by Dianne Kennedy

When you are in business you can keep more money than individuals, because you will be taxed what is left, which is profit.

Buying a home might seem like your biggest investment, but the house that you live in is **not a person's largest investment.**

One of my friends in Sydney once said, "Sydney prices went up like crazy! I bought the property that we live in in 2013 for \$675K and now after seven years it's one million. I made \$325K!"

I can only laugh when I hear these statements. Quietly I asked, how many properties do you have? He said only one; that's the property we live in.

At that moment I realised that he never had any property investments.

I simply replied to him saying, "OK, that's good, how much actual money did you make from this property?"

He replied, "So I bought for \$675 K and now if I were to sell it you can get \$1 million. So I can make \$325K."

I said "Ah, OK, that means you haven't made any money. Let's do the numbers to see how much actually you are making." So I started doing the calculations.

Price you bought the land for - \$375K.

The building costs \$300K.

How about the deposit? \$25K.

So that means you paid more than \$30K in Lender's mortgage insurance, right?

He said "Yes."

What about closing costs? He said "Around \$5K."

What about holding costs while building for 6 months?

He said, "It's around \$10K."

So our total cost so far is \$45K.

Now, after all that, after moving into the property, how much bank interest are you paying?

He said, "Roughly around \$25K a year."

So you paid \$25K x 7 over the period of time, so that cost around \$175K.

Then, I ask what about rates, insurance, water connection charges and maintenance?

So we will say \$5K for Council Rates, insurance and water connection charges. Also \$3K a year for maintenance (1 % per year) so the total cost is \$8K per year into 7 years, which is approximately \$56K.

So I calculated that all up it's going to cost you around \$276K.

Then I ask the next question: "How much tax do you pay as an employee?"

He said 30%. OK let's add tax, because when I invest in a property I do it pre-tax and you do it after tax. So the total comes in at around \$35,8000 (\$27,6000 + 30% taxes).

Then I said, what about the selling cost? Usually it's 5% so that means out of one million you have to spend \$50K (ignoring the tax part) so the total comes out at around \$400K.

So basically for the last 7 years you didn't make any money after you sell it, but you saved some money on rent, that's it, but you lost around 100K. Also this is excluding the inflation. He was shocked to hear that.

This is how **most average people think**; they have no clue about property investments because they think buying a house to live in is the biggest investment - the price goes up, they make money. These are average people who have a lot of academic education - they simply missed out on financial education. Most of these are regular people who go to work five days a week, in reality working two days for the government (payee taxes, Council rates, GST, etc) and paying work 1.5 days for the bank, and then try to live on the remaining 1.5 days salary for a week.

Buying property purely to live in will never make money, instead it's just saving you a few dollars in rent. Will you take advice from these people? I don't. Who thinks he is rich because they have one property on which he is still paying the mortgage?

It's up to you what results you want. These people may look rich, but they are going nowhere, so that's why you need to watch what people do, rather than listening only to what they say.

Property can give you few types of income which you need to study further to take advantage of them.

1. Appreciation
2. Depreciation & Amortization
3. Cash Flow

I have few friends who are in that oblivious category. They still don't understand the mess they are in, thinking that they have degrees from university and have been to good schools, so they can find good jobs in Australia, too. That's our culture. Unaware, they follow a simple plan and advise their children to do the same, which is:

- Go to school
- Get good grades
- Go to a good high school
- Become a doctor or engineer
- Get a job
- Work hard, climb the corporate ladder
- Buy a house to live in, as it's the biggest asset in your life
- Pay off debt, as debt is bad
- Invest in stocks, bonds
- Retire and die

Personally, I don't follow this plan but around 90% of people do. Following that plan is fine if you want to pay the price of not having freedom in life. If you closely monitor these people, often they've not been overseas for 8-10 years, not even visiting their home country for many years. Do you really want that kind of life? I don't think so!

Final Advice

Life can push you in different areas, so *make your decisions wisely*. **Applied knowledge has the power to keep you floating with the changes that come along.** Live on the edge so you can see both sides of the coin. It doesn't matter what the situation is, you need to be prepared to adjust to face it and make profit from it. You need to know how to make money regardless of the market conditions. Markets can go up, go down or can go flat, yet you need to know how to adjust your strategy to make money. To be successful, you need to see the **good and the bad**, the **short- and long-term consequences** of your decisions. Obviously, this is easier said than done, but it's the key to building wealth.



THE ECOLOGICAL SELF

“Sometimes slowing down is hard to bear. Your inner voice is constantly there examining you...telling you what you should and should not do”

PHOEBE LAY



Phoebe Lay



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phoebe Lay is a social media marketing coach and mentor. As the Founder of digital marketing agency Thrive and Shine Co., Phoebe helps business owners start and scale their entrepreneurial journey through social media marketing. Phoebe combines her strategic business experience with her expertise in Facebook and online marketing to help entrepreneurs win big and have the confidence and strategy to succeed.

“When we combine being heart centred and purpose-driven with the right strategy, that’s when we overcome challenges and begin to rise up and thrive & shine.”
- Phoebe Lay

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Slave to the Gram

BY PHOEBE LAY

'You can't write a book.'

'Who do you think you are, Mel Robbins?'

'It's not like you've created an empire, like Grace Lever. You're not Deepak Chopra, John DeMartini or Neale Donald Walsh.'

'Girl, you're way too young to be talking about success or contributing to a book with people who have double, triple, 10 x the years of experience in business as you.'

Meet my inner critic, or as Melissa Ambrosini would call it, my 'mean girl'. I grew up under the influence of a self-professed Chinese Tiger Mother. When the book *'Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother'* came out, my mum couldn't wait to share it with me. An American-Chinese 'mom' by the name of Amy Chua had finally drawn attention to Chinese parenting standards whilst perfectly describing Chinese mothers who raise their children in Western society. This American author painted a picture for Chinese mums who believed that their children could always do better, that A's should be A+ marks, and striving for perfection was a normal standard. My mother always told me, 'There is no need to celebrate your wins when there is always someone better and more successful.'

I was an only child and aiming to improve and be better was drummed into me from as early as I can remember.

As I sat down to finally start writing this chapter, I remembered the grim fact that *'Every 30 seconds, someone becomes a victim of modern-day slavery.'*

I reminded myself of why I got started in business.

Talking myself out of it was no longer an option.

Social media is one of those things; some days it works great, other days we have a love-hate relationship with it. It is so easy in today's world to compare ourselves against others. We are so prone to judgement and gauging our chapter 1 against someone else's chapter 21. What's even more strange is how much we care about what other people think. Most of the time it's strangers who we don't even know, who we may never even meet in person.

A lot of the time it's the noise in our head, the inner critic that keeps us from moving forward.

We can so easily put up a façade and on the outside appear to be going from strength to strength, living it up and have everything appear 'picture perfect' or as some would know it, 'Insta-worthy' - Instagram slang for an image that suggests everything's great and merry, usually used to describe flawless pictures that we share when we travel or talk about moments when we shine and feel our best.

When I started out in business I told myself never to fall into the trap of working just for the sake of making lots of money. I grew up in a humble household where we enjoyed the simple ways of living and cherished family time.

I will never forget the look on the faces in the crowd when I first got up on stage to talk about human trafficking to an audience of business owners.

It was four years into my first start-up, Matcha Sisters, and two years into my social media coaching business, Thrive and Shine Co. I had gone full time as a solopreneur after leaving my five-year career as a radiographer to pursue my true purpose. One day I was asked to speak at the Business Marketplace Expo about social media marketing.

I remember tossing and turning at night for months prior to the event, thinking about what I would talk about. I couldn't decide between offering insight on Facebook and Instagram marketing trends or sharing tips on how to overcome the Facebook 'algorithm', a buzzword that almost all the online marketers talk about.

'Who wouldn't benefit from knowing how to keep up with Facebook and Instagram's ever-changing algorithm though?' I thought to myself. 'Facebook makes it so hard to keep up with everything, it's almost impossible; overcoming the hurdles and understanding how the algorithm works would take months to apply.'

To thrive on social media you would have to dedicate hours each week to staying relevant, learning, posting, writing and scheduling as well as creating consistent visually engaging content. Unless you are excellent at remaining organised and you have an assistant helping you with the posting and keeping up with the changes, you would soon become rather tired of keeping up with the constant changes of the platforms. Not to mention all the commenting and responding to direct messages while simultaneously juggling everything else that you need to do in order to run your business - it can be very time consuming.

With more and more people jumping online to be seen and heard, the digital space has become an extremely competitive market.

As a social media mentor and Facebook marketing coach it made sense that I would keep it simple. After all, complexity is the enemy and I was starting to discover that more and more each day.

I heard that another Facebook marketer was going to be at the event, and I'd be sharing the stage with an international speaker. I was surprised that the guest was going to be speaking about the same topic I had chosen and it felt like someone had crashed the party before it even started. I also heard that this man was quite the talker, and that the year before, he had lost the audience by being on stage for almost two hours straight before finally being asked to stop for going way overtime.

I thought to myself, surely people in the audience will be bored to death if I also covered social media.

So I decided to do something unheard of; I went against the norm.

That day I decided to share about something that was not a topic ever discussed at these business events. I shared the facts about human trafficking and modern-day slavery, bringing light to the dark side of social media.

That morning, the room froze.

You could hear a pin drop when I shared about the fact that women and children all over the world can disappear or be sold by their own family. That due to poverty and lack of education, forced labour, sexual exploitation and modern slavery can occur even in Australia, hiding in plain sight.

I saw faces of shock and disbelief. It seemed that many people couldn't digest the fact that Australia can be a destination country for such criminal acts and as much as 80% and more go undetected.

Many people have heard of the term 'human trafficking' but most find it hard to explain precisely what it actually means. I felt compelled to get up and talk about something we prefer to be swept under the carpet. In a way, I did tie it back to social media... because children who meet strangers over the internet are usually the ones who get 'Taken', contrary to the way it is portrayed in Hollywood, it's not always just young women with a dad like the character Brian Mills (as in Liam Neeson).

After I spoke, the guest speaker presented about digital marketing. I remember an hour into his talk, people were starting to drift off and I was grateful that I'd kept mine short.

I had also livestreamed my talk on Instagram, captioning it 'The Dark Side of Social Media' along with the most appropriate hashtags, keeping the headline nice and to the point whilst it was also being live streamed in the Thrive and Shine in Business Facebook group.

As the day progressed, a lot of passers-by came to speak to me at my stand, not to purchase my matcha but to congratulate me on my talk and to ask about my heart centred social enterprise that has been giving back 50% of profits to anti-human-trafficking organisations - that seemed to draw a lot more attention than my main stall and I didn't really mind.

That night I logged into my Instagram after I got home, exhausted but grateful for a big day. I was excited to see the number of views from my earlier Instagram LIVE.

Somehow when I tried to open the app I had been logged out. So I popped my logins in again... I looked at my phone and all I could see were the words staring blankly at me; **'Account does not exist.'**

Odd. I tried again, and went to my computer to see if somehow I could figure things out on the Instagram browser.

Nothing.

'Account does not exist.'

Those words stared right at me.

My heart sank. I felt a thousand different thoughts and emotions rise in my chest. I felt like I couldn't breathe.

My mind was racing...

Has someone hacked into my account?

Was it gone for good?

What should I do to recover it?

How will I recover the thousands of followers who won't be able to find my account anymore?

Where will I go to find the content I had posted that I didn't share on my Facebook page?

How is my brand going to continue?

Who is going to re-do the hundreds of posts into which I had previously invested heart and soul?

My mind was clouded. I was full of mixed emotions and I felt like I just wanted to cry. But instead, I went searching for a solution online. I Googled ways to recover my Instagram account and saw that many others had the same happen to them. People reported stories of having appealed to Instagram, only to receive an automated reply, never to recover their account again.

I had spent hundreds of hours putting extra love into my Instagrid layout, finding and creating the perfect balance between colours, creativity, design and putting out inspirational quotes and content that was intended to gain and inspire followers through social media marketing advice, stories of lessons I had learned in business along the way, tips, cool pictures of behind-the-scenes, all with a balance of pink and white throughout my grid.

Every second image was a powerful quote I found, or a thought from my constantly challenging experiences in business. I would spend time not only thinking about the captions and the hashtags, but finding the right balance in the size, font and the calligraphy of the words. It was something my grandmother taught me from a young age from when she was teaching me how to create art and calligraphy with Chinese characters.

I had no idea that I had actually become a slave to '*the gram*'. I was waking up each day and the first thing I'd do was check my Instagram and write my post for the day and I would spend endless hours on Canva and Planoly designing my posts. I even hired a virtual assistant to assist me. I was outsourcing the growth of my profile to multiple agencies. This was where I believe things went downhill.

Little did I realise that losing my Instagram account was a blessing in disguise. It was a sign that I needed to stop focusing on what wasn't even putting money into my bank account. I finally decided to move on; deep down that night, I knew, it was all going to be okay, it was a sign that I needed to stop spending so much time on

“perfection”. I knew deep inside that somehow I would rise up stronger from it.

What I discovered was that although I could not salvage my hard work and my account would never be recovered, my world was actually more or less still the same. I soon realised that because I had established a solid lead generating machine for my business, I was able to focus on what was really moving the dial. All the work I had put in over the years building my online community and Facebook marketing funnel was still day by day, growing my business.

No matter how many followers you may have on Facebook and Instagram, if you don't have a reliable system that allows you to build strong relationships with your potential customers outside of a few likes and a thumbs up emoji, you will still have no business even if you have tens of thousands following your brand. What's important is that you are able to establish a connection that goes beyond social media. The starting point being your online 'CRM' - Client Relationship Manager, which allows you to build and manage your list, sending out frequent e-mails, offers, newsletters and allowing you to contact your leads outside of social media and progressively move them down the funnel towards making a purchase.

The further down the buyers cycle the more trust that occurs which enables you to get the potential customer to listen to what you have to say. Instead of actively interrupting your audience with “*push marketing*”, you are providing content that brings potential customers to you when they need you.

Attract 'scrolling traffic' to your page with valuable content such as infographics, social media live videos, and offering an irresistible lead magnet such as a free eBook. Convert visiting traffic with online forms that have a strong call-to-action on your landing page. Close leads captured in your CRM through lead-nurturing. This will engage potential customers through ongoing content that you can combine with your story to make it unique to your brand. Always be showing support and adding value.

In the end, other than feeling like I had lost a facet to my brand, my business wasn't really affected at all. My revenue did not drop that month or even in the following months when I was engaging with new prospects who had never come across my brand.

Although I was conscious of the fact that I was missing an account and a strong following on one of my favourite platforms, I discovered a valuable lesson: we do not own our social media accounts and at any point in time they can be taken away from us.

Even if our social media accounts have two-factor authentication turned on for extra security, there are many ways our accounts can still be compromised, get disabled or even disappear overnight.

The thought of that can be off putting, but we can be reassured by the fact that business will continue on, as long as we have a proper marketing system and a funnel in place.

It may not be the same, however, we will still be able to continue serving our customers and build our brand, which at the end of the day exists way beyond Facebook, and social media.

If you own a database and have a list (such as a CRM) that is the best reassurance and system that you can have to ensure that, even in the worst-case scenario you lost your Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn account, your business will still survive.

What I learned was:

- We don't own our social media accounts - Mark Zuckerberg does.
- I was lucky to have a marketing system that did not solely rely on one marketing platform.
- If you have a solid marketing funnel and system, your business will still thrive even in times of crisis.
- Losing a social media account did not affect my revenue because I owned my database.
- We don't own our social media accounts (did I already mention that?)

Months later I found myself in Bali taking some time out for myself. I had dedicated 10 days to work on my vision and where I wanted to go with it all. I was grateful to spend it in beautiful and tranquil Ubud where I got to have a 'social media detox'.

I remember asking myself that age-old question, what am I doing with my life? Why am I working so hard and still feeling like I am going nowhere?

My idea of being successful in business was spending time in the present moment with friends and family and having more time to do the things I enjoyed at my own pace and leisure. Instead I was working longer hours than anyone else I knew and had to sacrifice many experiences I felt would have been ones I'd remember for life, including joining my friends on holidays overseas.

Although my weekends felt productive and on purpose, there was a feeling that the hard work was never ending.

My vision of an ideal business was to be able to work from anywhere in the world and spend my time the way I wanted. But what was the point of all the hard work and dedication if it would cost me my health?

'Don't go to Bikram yoga this morning, trust me. Just allow yourself to rest.'

I woke up one morning and found myself tossing between my inner critic who was telling me to get up and go for a swim, meditate and do some hot, sweaty, Bikram yoga - and just sleeping in and taking myself out for breakfast.

I was thinking about Bikram that morning, the kind of yoga that you practice in a 40 degree room. And I found myself reminding myself of why I was here. To switch off and be present and kind to myself. I was in Ubud after all.

It was my second day in Bali and I had been slaving away for over 10 months without taking a single holiday. I had told myself that 2019 was my year of 'focus' and I made a promise that I would not go overseas that year until I had created for myself a 'successful 'lifestyle business'.

But what is the definition of success?

Was it lying on the couch, absolutely drained of all my energy and strength?

Was it waking up in the middle of the night stressing about my to-do-list for the following day?

Was it spending hours upon hours on Canva, Instagram and Photoshop, designing my grid so that I could attract more followers?

Or was it to live my life with ease, grace, and flow?

Sitting there in Bali, I suddenly discovered the art of slowing down to allow myself to *just be*. I also realised that a lot of my actions in the past were actually driven by fear. Fear of not achieving, fear of lack, fear of being judged, fear of the unknown, fear of not having enough, and it stopped me from slowing down to experience my true being.

In the place of stillness, we meet our true selves.

Sometimes slowing down is hard to bear. Your inner voice is constantly there, examining you, telling you what you should and shouldn't do and telling you how you can do better.

She looks at a situation with judgement and tells you how things can and should improve. Sometimes she is nice. She quiets down and lets you appreciate the moment for what it is. Sometimes she will let you just be. My goodness, is that a good feeling!

I've finally discovered the art of ignoring her. Strangely enough it's actually revealed a key lesson for success in life!

When I saw my hard work crumble before me, for the first time I actually felt fully supported, more than ever before. Knowing that this was all part of a greater plan. Like an exam where the desired outcome was not to get the A+ but to discover what the true lesson was behind it all.

When I was in Bali I had my first encounter with the Phoebe who could just be completely still and present. I thought I was going there to meditate and do yoga. It turned out there was a different plan for me.

The plan was to STOP.

That morning, I didn't take myself to my yoga mat or my meditation spot by the river. I relaxed by the pool at the villa I had hired for my first non-business-related photoshoot. Just for the fun of it.

The first sign occurred when a client of mine emailed me to say he was no longer continuing with my team. He had found a social media company that specifically deals with builders, and even though he loved the work we had done for him he wanted to go further with a more established agency.

I felt nothing.

The second sign occurred when my second highest-paying regular client messaged and said that he was taking a break from business and going back to working a full-time job.

Emails started flooding my inbox and I saw subjects like 'I can no longer make my appointment', 'Please pause my account' and what was worse, I got messages from my team telling me they were no longer able to continue contracting for me anymore. Both were due to personal health reasons.

This all happened in a matter of days and only while I was in Ubud.

I thought to myself, is it all just a coincidence? Was it me?

I felt no emotions. I was calm.

In fact, I felt supported.

By the time I left Ubud for Changgu, my mind was clear. I felt completely at peace.

In the past I would have tried to control or resolve these situations by making calls, organising follow up, asking for feedback and finding ways to work things work. In a less grounded version of me I probably would have blamed myself for letting the wheels fall off my business and acted out of emotion.

But this time, I just let it go. I suddenly realised, it didn't matter how hard I worked, if I wasn't in alignment with what I was doing, what did it matter? I knew my mother's kind of worry came from a place of love, but I needed to make my own mistakes. Perhaps it's the constant expectation drummed into me from childhood, that in order to achieve success, we must first work hard and, 'taste the bitter before the sweet.'

Growing up, mum loved telling me stories of her childhood. She would talk about growing up in China and her days spent with my grandmother, as Nan was working on her calligraphy and becoming a teacher. Although Nanna is still an absolute perfectionist, I'll always admire her for the commitment she has towards her craft and her infectious positivity energy. However, the strive for perfection seemed to have stuck with me and I was constantly weighing myself down with unrealistic expectations - most of which I discovered I had placed on myself.

Currently the definition of success seems to be finishing a university degree, getting a well-paid stable career, getting married, buying a house and having children - all before the age of 30. For some, success seems to be defined as owning a 7 figure business, driving luxury cars, how many times a week you go out to a nice restaurant, the brands that you wear and how frequently you travel and take fancy Insta-worthy photos.

Bali made me realise that I didn't need much to be happy. Freedom, wind in my hair, sun on my skin and less time on my iPhone was all I needed to relax and let go. I was so still, content and at peace with everything I had in life, it made me realise how much I didn't enjoy working within a set of 'must dos'. After my return from Bali I discovered I had actually been suffering from severe iron deficiency and anaemia and that my business was affecting my health even more than I'd realised.

I have discovered that business and life is like the waves of the tide; it ebbs and flows and you just have to ride the waves and be fluid rather than rigid.

Rather than striving for sales and spending countless hours in an office, making calls and going from one meeting to the next, constantly trying to get more clients, I can now actually focus my energy and attention on the clients that I DO have and be grateful for them.

Even as an entrepreneur we have our boundaries and rules. We must do our bookkeeping, our marketing, call our 'leads', have meetings to establish someone's needs, wants and expectations and then prove that we are the right one for them. I was constantly trying to acquire new clients and make ends meet in a three month contracting role I had agreed to try out, in an attempt to find more stability in my new life as a business owner.

I was so sick of the back to back meetings and making calls, contacting people I didn't know, trying to chase the next client and getting enough bookings to meet with people who didn't value my time.

This experience allowed me to realise something very pivotal during the beginning of my journey as an entrepreneur:

It's not about how much time you spend on your business. You may have the most creative team, uplifting and inspiring content, a strong online presence and thousands of followers but if you don't focus enough on your own needs as a business owner and create balance that keeps you fulfilled, things will fall apart.

When we avoid facing our problems, they don't go away. Unless we face them head on they will keep coming back, even if it's after one, two, five, or ten years.

Believe that the universe has a plan for you during your trials and tribulations and turn them into your greatest victories.

Now, I am currently living day by day with gratitude and immense joy for the simple things. It's COVID-19 times but I have a beautiful roof over my head and I wake up every day to meditate with the sounds of birds chirping in the background. I get to look out my window and enjoy the sight of greenery, palm trees and beautiful nature. In a way, I brought a piece of Bali home with me. Latin dancing, running, bike riding and spending time with the ones I love energises me more as each day passes.

My business, Thrive and Shine, is growing, as more business owners are jumping onto social media to increase their brand awareness, whilst my passion project and social enterprise Matcha Sisters is still donating 50% of profit to Abolition and Hagar Australia, the organisations I spoke about that fine day my Instagram disappeared.



THE SEXUAL SELF

“Moments of crisis big and
small teach us how resilient
and creative we can be”

JOHN DI NATALE



John Di Natale



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Di Natale is well known as a mentor, speaker and author. His TEDx Talk in 2020 was memorable as he engaged his audience with the powerful question; ‘What do you want to be known for?’

He expands on the subject, explaining that your expectations work at a subconscious level. “Are yours helping you achieve the life you really want – or are they holding you back?”

Do you sometimes feel like you’re living below your real potential? Do you want to do more and be more? Now more than ever, the world needs you to step up!”

John is passionate about helping you get complete clarity on what you want to be known for, create unshakeable confidence and self-esteem, overcome fear and achieve everything you want – in your business, in your career and in life.

John has been informing and entertaining audiences for more than 20 years. As well as being a TEDx speaker, he is the President of Professional Speakers Australia and his speaking career has taken him to conferences and events in thirteen countries – so far. He is the founder of Equi Wealth and co-founder of new tech start-up, 100 Lunches.

“I’m at my happiest when I’m coaching and mentoring people to be their very best – as a speaker, business leader, influencer or entrepreneur,” he says.

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The Brave New Normal of Business

Three big changes in a crisis and
why leaders should love them.

BY JOHN DI NATALE

In 2020 the world changed forever. The year started well enough and then, before we knew it, we were in the middle of a global pandemic.

Initially, there was shock and disbelief - public gatherings were banned, businesses closed, people were being stood down or losing their jobs and city streets became eerily empty. For people who still had jobs to do, there were long days of adjusting to working from home and a gradual transition from being distracted to being more productive. Within a few weeks, resilience and the power of the human spirit kicked in and we began generating new ideas, reading more, creating new content and programs, learning more about online platforms and having virtual meetings and lunches with people we might otherwise have never connected with. More importantly, perhaps for the first time in years, we had time to... think. Think about what we really wanted to do with our careers, our businesses, our lives.

The world is constantly changing, but those changes usually happen slowly. Sometimes we're conscious of them and they influence our thinking, and sometimes we're oblivious until it's too late. Then something like COVID-19 comes along and we're caught in an avalanche of fast-moving change. Bring on the change, I say, because going back to 'normal' would be a big step backwards. New ideas have been born and new benchmarks set. Normal just doesn't live here anymore – and that's a good thing.

You may have heard the expression; 'In every crisis, there is also opportunity.' I believe that's true, not just in the midst of major challenges, but also in the smaller challenges faced every year by those of us trying to survive in business, building our careers and designing our lives. Moments of crisis, big and small, teach us just how resilient and creative we can be.

In fact, our creative lives are a key contributor to our business success. When we are given the opportunity to reconnect with the creative urges within us, we access a place of nourishment and inspiration.

Suppressing our instinctual creativity limits us in so many ways. I've always questioned how the pieces that make me who I am fit together in a business context. For many years, I kept them separate, rationalising that by saying to myself; "well, if you're a professional, writing and playing music isn't consistent with your brand." I was wrong.

Nothing is more on brand than all of your authentic self, showing up every time.

I'm a professional speaker, mentor and author but I also like to work with my hands, fixing or making things. I enjoy creating music, writing songs and poetry. For many years I avoided the parts of who I am crossing over each other, but there is in fact a deep connection between them. There's something deeply satisfying and inherently sensual about transforming a slab of reclaimed mahogany into a beautiful table. If you've ever run your hand gently along the smoothly polished surface of a piece of timber, you'll know what I mean. Having words and melody come together in a song that caresses your soul creates its own natural high. These experiences make me who I am and guide the way I work with people.

Creating processes that enable something beautiful to emerge from inside someone, often when they couldn't have even imagined it was possible, is one of the most gratifying things I do. My wish is that you find that same connection between what you find intrinsically satisfying and how you show up in the world. If that's what comes of a crisis, it can only be a good thing. I want to outline for you four significant changes that emerge from crisis and the reasons why we should hang on to them long after we're through to the other side.

The way we show up

Being real

Working from home this year reminded us that we are all trying to balance our work life, our home life, our social life and our love life. Despite the more relaxed dress code, everyone's brains were still perfectly functional even when not at the office and even when not wearing a suit.

But the deeper lesson was that it's OK to not be happy all the time, or positive or motivated. There is no need to put on a brave face when we're feeling anxious, or sad, or pressured, because being real is better than faking it. We were reminded that being authentic is fine; it's healthy and it actually feels good.

If we can internalise these lessons, it's likely that we'll find our workplaces will become more tolerant and responsive to situations where projects may not be completely on track or don't achieve the results hoped for. A new level of transparency and a focus on practical solutions will replace excuses and blame. As leaders, we have moved to a new level of trust and found that with far less micro-management, our people can operate independently and still contribute effectively to an organisation's success.

Caring more

There is something about a crisis that pushes people back to fundamentals. When under pressure we refocus on our mission, we have a natural tendency to want to help and we feel the responsibility to make a positive

contribution. Caring more is one of the most important things for us to hold on to when the crisis is over.

Business is about your team. These are the valuable people who lead, innovate, support, create and enable your business to do its thing. A commitment to your vision and the “why” that drives your business is the starting point. A real concern for the wellbeing of your team shouldn’t be a fleeting response when things go pear-shaped. People respond well to consistent, genuine care and this is a new reality they will want to support by working harder, adapting and ultimately making your business stronger.

A renewed focus on balance

It’s strange but true that we wait for the world to get messed up before we really appreciate the simpler things. The freedom to go for a relaxing walk and enjoy the sunshine. Time with family, friends and loved ones. Many of my clients have rediscovered the concept of balance only because they were forced to, and those that have are in no hurry to let it go. If we want to be truly productive, there will be times when we have to be hard on ourselves and times when we should be gentle on ourselves. The lesson for leadership is that people need time to watch their favourite movie, eat chocolate, scroll aimlessly through Insta and get outside. Sometimes, those activities might overlap with what we would usually consider to be “work hours”- and that might actually be a good thing for fostering happiness, creativity and effectiveness.

Drop the ego

Business is not about you. No, not even your business. Business is about the people you serve – your customers, clients, or members, and it's about the people on your team. It's easy to lose sight of the people you're meant to serve with issues of sales, marketing, brand and personal brand building, social media posting and the need to “tell your story” all competing for your attention. Whether you're a solopreneur or a corporation, none of those issues matters one little bit if you can't engage your clients in a meaningful conversation about their needs and how you can fulfil them, their fears and how you can alleviate them, their dreams and how you can help make them come true. This, when all the fluff has blown away, is what business is about.

The way we work

Diary note. Post COVID.

“It was my first Monday back at work after months of being in lockdown! I was looking forward to getting back to the office and catching up with everyone. As I stepped out of the elevator, I was stopped by someone in a full hazmat suit who scanned my forehead, took a swab and then waved me through the air-sealed doors. I stepped inside and couldn't believe my eyes. My desk was inside a big glass box with an exhaust tube coming out the top, which disappeared into the ceiling. The meeting tables were gone. The kitchen was closed. Talking was prohibited, except on Teams or Zoom. The usual aroma of freshly roasted coffee in the morning had been replaced by the all-too-familiar smell of hand sanitiser...”

I'm exaggerating (just a little!) but the way we work has changed over the past few years and was effectively redefined in 2020. Working remotely, supported by online platforms and tech, will unquestionably be a much more prominent part of the landscape from now on.

Working remotely

I've had many discussions over the past couple of years with one of my CEO clients about employees working from home. Until recently, she remained adamant: it just doesn't work, can't possibly work for her business because her business is different. As I write this, she has decided not to renew the lease on a whole floor of prime city office space because... well, because her business has in fact become more efficient and substantially more profitable as a result of people working from home. She's a new convert to the idea of flexible working arrangements, remote teams and online collaboration (I restrained myself from saying "I told you so!") and she's not alone. The leaders of some of the world's best-known organisations, especially in the tech space, are thinking the same way and changing the way they work, including:

- Barclays - 70,000 staff working from home during the pandemic. A big city office "May be a thing of the past," said the bank's boss Jes Staley.
- Facebook - extending work from home until the end of 2020, as part of a long-term shift to more remote working. (Half of their workforce expected to do their work outside Facebook's offices over the next 5 years.)

- Mastercard - says the majority of its employees can work from home until they “are ready” to return. They are also looking to consolidate their global offices.
- Twitter - has offered staff the option of working from home permanently, said chief executive Jack Dorsey.⁹

Rather than supervision, control, meetings and reports, the focus of leadership has been moved back to the most important part of any business – the customer. The creation of a fabulous customer experience doesn't depend solely upon nice offices. In fact, in many businesses, the customer never even sees the offices. Great customer experiences are created by empowered, enthusiastic and committed people, by streamlined processes that make doing business with you easy and enjoyable, by real care and commitment to the customer relationship.

Embrace digital and online

It can be a tricky transition for some, but there has never been a better time to embrace these aspects of doing business, no matter how far out of your comfort zone it is. Rethink your strategy; now is the time to make it happen.

One of the most important lessons of operating a business when the world is in lockdown is how much value your online strategy can add. Many bricks and mortar businesses moved very quickly to offering an online digital extension.

9. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-52765165>

Coronavirus: Flexible working will be a new normal after virus, Justin Harper Business Reporter 22 May 2020.

Restaurants are a good example. What do you do when it's impossible for your customers to come and dine with you? You upgrade your website so they can order online and arrange delivery. You communicate with them by email and text. You create an app. Ironically, many restaurants have forged deeper relationships with their existing customers and gained new ones in a time when customers are staying home. When people can finally go out and enjoy a meal, these restaurants will be very, very busy. Their next challenge will be finding a way to make those customers "stick".

Remember when you would drive all the way across town to have a coffee meeting with someone - and it often turned out to be a complete waste of time? Remember team and project meetings we would delay for a week or more because we had to fly someone in from interstate? It's a very inefficient process and if we are prepared to admit it, many of the meetings in our business are simply a waste of time. The sales team would spend all their time defending their results, marketing would be focused on justifying more ad spend, the reports were detailed but not helpful and as a manager, you would just end up frustrated.

We've become smarter about how we meet - because we've had to. Some meetings have been dropped altogether and things didn't fall apart. The ones that remained are shorter and punchier, with less emphasis on process and more on 'just getting it done'.

It was a revelation for me that when my clients formed their teams to deal with crisis, only the necessary people were in the meeting, there was a sense of purpose, there was urgency. Those teams put aside job titles and “years in the seat” and focused instead on moving quickly to solve problems. It would be a shame to waste that momentum and go back to old ways with out-dated processes and unnecessary delays.

We’ve made huge strides in 2020 when it comes to virtual collaboration. Online collaboration tools, project and task management software, intranets and document access solutions mean that we can work effectively, no matter whether we’re in a different building or a different city. We’re more comfortable with video conferencing than ever before. Even the social aspects of work have successfully gone remote with virtual team lunches that allow us to keep up the office banter. Of course, none of that will excite airlines and the travel industry, but it should excite you if you want your business to shine.

Wellbeing matters

One of the biggest challenges with running your own business – whether you’re a start-up or have been going for 20 years – is being always “on”. Not only is this hustle culture detrimental to productivity, its simply bad for you – and your team. What if instead, we recognised that time out is just as valuable as time in your business? What if we brought recreation, exercise, time with family and friends back into the picture of what being a business owner or professional should look like? After all, many of us started a business or career because we wanted the flexibility it was supposed to give us.

The concept of work-life balance has for some, been extended to work-life integration. Work-life balance is about having your work and personal life co-exist successfully. Work-life integration is about bringing them closer together. Its less about what is work time and personal time and more about using your time in the best possible way. This might mean working later at night if that's when you're more creative or productive. It might mean fitting some of your personal life into the usually accepted work hours. For some this is a better model and a way to avoid burning out.

The challenge of striking a balance is even greater for women who still carry most of the responsibility for looking after children, even when working full time. This is one of my favourite statistics from COVID-19: nearly half of men surveyed in New York claimed they did most of the home-schooling. Three per cent of women agreed¹⁰

The way we change

When 2020 demanded that they respond, companies that had been thinking about, talking about, or 'working on' their digital strategy for years, suddenly launched it in a week. The usual project teams and approval processes were thrown out the proverbial window. Instead of "Oh, write up a proposal and submit it for review," the question was "How quick can it be live?" They were forced to think entirely differently when the timelines demanded it. The result has been massive amounts of exciting innovation.

10. Nearly Half of Men Say They Do Most of the Home Schooling. 3 Percent of Women Agree., NY Times, Claire Cain Miller, Published May 6, 2020 Updated May 8, 2020.

If we maintain this thinking into the future, if we reward it, how many other aspects of business could we totally transform?

So many organisations operate under a fear of failure. But thinking through every possible scenario is an urgency killer. We don't want to be reckless, but we can't go back to business as usual. We have to keep the sense of urgency that makes things happen. It will be critical to surviving the next year.

Be like a gymnast

Every now and then, just like a champion gymnast, we are reminded of the importance of flexibility (the ability to bend without breaking) and agility (the ability to move quickly). A crisis is an obvious reminder, but if we pay attention, there are reminders all through the year. Businesses that embody both these qualities will continue to stand out.

Of course, when you operate a business with flexibility and agility as guiding principles, there is a greater chance that there will be errors and failures, but with the right controls in place these are unlikely to be catastrophic. Some organisations operate under a heavy cloud of fear – fear of making a mistake, fear of failure. Whilst this might be a safer path, it kills any sense of urgency and stifles creativity. Being flexible and agile is not about having the most cutting-edge technology; it is about your ability to react and adapt in response to changes in the business environment or to customer needs. It is about the right people, doing the right thing, at the right time, to achieve the right outcome.

Focus on adaptability

The pace of change seems to be constantly increasing, making predictability an ever-growing challenge for businesses. As a result, many companies have recognised the need to be adaptable as crucial for survival. Long-term plans have given way to an emphasis on experimentation and learning so changes can be made quickly. For example, execs at Atlassian, one of Australia's most successful tech companies, have said they will now plan for a "series of four quarters" instead of a full year ahead.

The ability to prioritise and re-prioritise in light of new information will set the leaders apart. Adopting an approach that can evolve and adapt as required will be critical for business longevity and effective feedback loops will be key in this endeavour.

Some things have changed forever. Others, not at all.

According to a recent survey,¹¹ when things return to "normal" in 2020, 40% of people intend to work more from home, 33% will limit visits to the supermarket and 30% plan to do more online shopping. How accurate these predictions are remains to be seen, but there will no doubt be long-lasting, residual change across many areas of life.

¹¹ Pureprofile 20 April 2020.

Businesses that revert back to the ways they previously conducted their businesses will find themselves challenged by their customers, their teams and by new, more dynamic enterprises. Inevitably, embracing change always provides a competitive advantage.

As the saying goes however, the more things change, the more they stay the same. The need to care more about listening to our customers and to the employees that make our businesses thrive has not gone away. If we ignore the fundamentals, we risk losing not only the loyalty of our employees, but our clients will happily ignore us and find someone else who can take care of them. Crisis on any scale provides us with an opportunity to reset, redesign and reengage. Reset our thinking in the light of changes in business; redesign our processes to be more efficient and re-engage with our customers to create an even more rewarding customer experience.



THE 6 SELVES

“Self-awareness and human connection becomes imperative, as they are what connects us to our clients, colleagues and teams.”

DEBBIE ZITA

The 6 Selves Identified

Did you see a part of yourself as you read about the inspiring stories?

Could you identify with the triumphs and the challenges?

Let's recap...

The simple inquiry process of The 6 Selves™ provides a starting point in the creation of profound yet subtle internal shifts in our thought processes. These changes create access to opportunities and possibilities outside of our current scope of awareness.

Vanessa demonstrated her capacity to tap into her creative divinity by relying on a 'higher power.' She accessed the wisdom and gentleness of 'The Spiritual Self.' You can too, by pondering this question -

Who would I be without this physical life, body and mind?

Donna accessed the power of emotions by deciding to make 'energizing decisions' that serve her and her clients at a higher level. She utilized the transformational power of 'The Emotional Self.' You can do that by asking this question -

'Who would I be without my extreme emotions ruling my sense of self and my decision making abilities?'

Greg utilized his clear legacy to 'make the world a better place' and this aspect of self to support his clients to grow into their next version. He utilized the depth and generosity of 'The Legacy Self.'

You can also by reflecting on this question -

'What do I want to be known for a 1000 years after I am gone?'

Charith was able to 'actualize a framework' that valued what he did and thus bought about shifts in his ability and capacity to generate and leverage money. He leveraged the power of 'The Valued Self. You can leverage yours by considering the answer to this question -

'What positive changes might occur if I placed more energy on the individuals (and projects) that value me the most?'

Phoebe 'slowed down' to escape that 'inner voice' and continues to follow her quiet space within. This enabled her to show up for her clients and causes that are closest to her heart. She did the inner work required to shift past cultural and family dynamics that encompass 'The Ecological Self'. You can shift yours too by considering this question -

'If you felt 'I belong here' in every room you entered in your experience of life, how might you show up?'

And finally **John** 'showed his resilience and creativity' when it was required the most. He accessed the birthright of his sexual creative energy by acknowledging 'The Sexual Self.' This contributes to his ever growing success on and off stages worldwide. You can access yours by considering this question -

'Who would I be in the world if I gave myself full permission to express myself unashamedly?'



Debbie Zita



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie Zita is an Australian author and authority in Heart Centred Business Networking and Self Leadership. Since 2012 she has mentored hundreds in Australia/ NZ and USA across an array of industries including health and wellbeing, law, design and education. Clients describe her as having the ability to 'lovingly give them a metaphoric kick up the backside while somehow knowing, better than they do, their deepest fears and dreams.'

Her skillset spans two decades in the areas of psychology and human behavior combined with thousands of hours in spiritual development (in particular the practice of opening the spiritual heart).

Along with years and close to \$100k invested and countless books studied in the areas of sales, marketing, team building and business development.

Her vision is to partake in the creation of a world where leadership positions in both the public and private sectors are taken up by more 'heart centred' individuals. Her approach is simple -

'The backbone to a heart centred society begins and ends with our leaders. The resilience displayed in modern day small to medium sized business owners provides them with the skill set to engage, impact and become the leaders of tomorrow. This process occurs by fostering emotionally intimate, respectful and diverse personal and professional relationships. The starting point is the cultivation of an ongoing intimate relationship with the hidden, unresolved and unleveraged parts of ourselves - this is known as self leadership.'

Debbie sits on the Board of Directors for New York Based charity Hope for Education Ghana, providing access to education via tuition grants.

Her qualifications include:

- Bachelor of Behavioral Science (Psychology) (Latrobe University, 2002)
- Bachelor of Social Work (Monash University, 2005)
- Certificate in CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy 2005)
- Certificate in TV and Editorial Styling + Image Consulting (2013)

- Certificate IV Training and Assessment (2007) and (2017)
- Certificate in Advanced Communication NLP + Family Constellation Work (San Francisco) (2016).
- Certificate 1-6 in Inner studies including Reiki Healing & Spiritual Heart Development (2012-2019)

Her other book titles and projects:

Amazon titles *'Ignite Your Joy - How to Invite More Love Purpose and Profit into Your Life'* and *'Success in Business'*.

Digital titles *'9 Lessons About Self Love, Every Man and Woman Should Know - Attract the Right Partner'* *'Rapid Change - 9 Reasons Not to do it'*, *'Not Another Inspirational Book'* and *'The 3 Pillars to Solidifying Your Collaborative Practice for lawyers, psychologists and financial advisors'*.

Founder The Heart Centred Way

Creator The 6 Selves™ and The Possibility of Something Even More Beautiful™

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The 6 Stories Behind The 6 Selves™

BY DEBBIE ZITA

The day I decided to be a businesswoman...

The Spiritual Self

Who would I be without this physical life, body and mind?

'He's gone,' the voice on the other end of the phone said, firmly but gently. I collapsed.

'He' was my partner of five years. A part of my life that I had kept hidden out of fear of ridicule and judgment. Different races, religions and various factors meant that I felt I had to keep quiet. I loyally did this with deep devotion.

The severe shock from the suddenness and the magnitude of this event meant I spent weeks in physical convulsions. I recalled memories of him saying, 'Time is coming to an end,' and 'Please forgive me.'

'He's gone...' Those words echoed in my mind.

In reality it was all 'gone' and he seemed to know something that I was yet to discover...

The life
The house
The money
The business
The dream
'He's gone.'

As the weeks and months unfolded, it became clear that the life I thought we shared was a series of desires I clung to like a child holding an old teddy. It was a relationship I had created in my mind and my heart in an effort to find meaning in my life.

He was 'my world.'

As my world collapsed like a house of cards, I recalled similar words; 'She's gone.' They were uttered to me on a phone call 10 years prior.

'She' was my mother. At the time, I was 27 years old and 4 months pregnant.

'Now what?' I asked myself.

Both of 'my worlds' had disappeared.

I could hate them. Loathe them. Despise them.
For leaving, for lying and for so many other reasons...

However, I knew that, 'Hanging on to resentment, is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill someone else.'¹²

¹² Alice May, *Surviving Betrayal: Hope and Help for Women Whose Partners Have Been Unfaithful* (Harper Collins, 1999)

Having been on a quest for God¹³ and for meaning since the ripe old age of three, I knew in my heart, that was not the best decision to make.

Forgive, let go and be grateful for the memories, experiences and humble learnings. I had to - for my own wellbeing.

'Now what?' I asked myself.

'Move! Promise me you will move when things get tough!' These were the exact words with which 'he' had implored me during our last face to face interaction.

So I *moved!*

That decision, along with a willingness to follow my heart, led me on the most exquisite adventures. The series of serendipitous events that unfolded read like a movie script. In the wise, melodic words of John Lennon:

'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.'¹⁴

The year was 2018. I was 37 years old.

The Business Lesson?

Grit and Resilience

Business Success Level Emotionally and Spiritually:

10/10

Business Success Level Financially: 0/10

¹³ God also refers to the creator, universe, divinity, or life.

¹⁴ John Lennon, Song 'Beautiful Boy' Album Double Fantasy (Geffen Records 1981)

The day I decided to be a businesswoman...

The Emotional Self

Who would I be, without my extreme emotions ruling my sense of self and my decision making abilities?

'It's been cancelled.'

Those words rang in my ears for days. I wanted to be grateful that I was healthy and that I lived in a country that was safe. But I was angry!

That week I had returned home from a two-week spiritual retreat at an ashram in Bali. It was life-changing and humbling. I was gearing up to emcee for an event in Australia, held by the peak body for a niche part of Family Law known as Collaborative Family Practice, where lawyers work together to facilitate child and foster family-focused discussions.¹⁵

I was so excited to be involved. It had significant meaning to me, given my former husband and I went through a collaborative process six years prior. The invitation was extended to me by my past collaborative divorce lawyer, who was my client just months prior, this made it that much more special.

'It's been cancelled' meant the event was not going ahead due to the pandemic and all that I had worked for seemed wasted.

¹⁵ Australian Government Discovering What Works for Families 'What is this thing called collaborative law?' (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2020)

My emotions got the better of me. And I must admit that my ego did too. Bye-bye calm 'Ashram Debbie', hello 'The Hulk.' It meant so much to me and I had gotten too attached.

I spent many days in solitude afterward learning how to accept what had occurred.

Then I 'moved'.

I turned my home office into a dream office, I moved the business networking group I ran from face to face to online and I did what most of us did. Zoom, zoom, zoom!

Next, I spoke to my clients. Some left. Some stayed. I oscillated between deep gratitude and terror. My partner's business was open, then had to close, then opened and closed again.

What were we going to do?! I know, we all asked that one!

As I sat at my kitchen table, I began thinking of the women in my community who had two or even three kids at home (meaning home schooling). I was extremely lucky, as I had formed a tight bond with my former husband and his wife - they are, as far as I am concerned, my family, which meant I had time and space to work.

I wanted to support others. I began by offering online meditations and free to low-cost master classes based on a book I wrote many years ago called 'Ignite Your Joy.' It struck a chord and has supported over 50 women since.

Learning how to turn emotion into useful action was the gift. And it's a gift I teach my clients to turn to daily, by first recognizing we are holding tension in our bodies; noticing our thoughts and making the decision to simply allow life to unfold, one baby step at a time.

Since then and while simultaneously home schooling, my clients have:

Written books

Relaunched their websites

Given online talks (often for the first time)

Launched programs

Increased their revenue by 20-60%

The year was 2020. I was 39 years old.

The Business Lesson?

Patience and Trust

Business Success Level Emotionally and Spiritually:

9/10

Business Success Level Financially: 7/10

The day I decided to be a businesswoman...

The Legacy Self

What do I want to be known for, a thousand years after I am gone?

'Give me some feedback - hmmm - Give me some feedback darling...'

I awoke to those lyrics and a clear melody singing its way through my mind.

I must confess, I am not a singer but I have taken quite a few drum lessons.

This song sang itself to me at 7.07am. By 1.17pm I had recorded (just on my iPhone) a song that was complete with lyrics, melody a beat, verse and a chorus - thank you drum lessons and online learning, aka Google and YouTube.

The day prior I had used my savings to escape life and the painful aftermath of the 'He's gone' phone call.

I found myself in picturesque Daylesford, Victoria at a beautiful spa retreat. Grateful to be in a position to pay for that experience, I sat in my shock and grief, awaiting healing.

After I wrote the song, I felt compelled to go online to Facebook. I want to preface this next part of the story by saying I had not taken any form of medication or drugs - prescription or recreational. I was simply 'following my heart' and my intuition as I always do.

I reached out to people on Facebook who I felt a resonance with. One of those people happened to be someone who would change the trajectory of my life and my career forever. His name is Dominic. I messaged him, stating 'I believe we have some work to do together.'

As it would turn out and without any prior research of his profile from my end (not even a tiny bit) it was soon revealed that he was the director for a charity based in New York City. The charity is dedicated to supporting education in the region of Ghana in Africa. We chatted about life and spirituality. I ended up providing hours of pro bono coaching about leadership, marketing and social media.

We joked about the fact that I should be on the board of directors.

I boldly said, 'You are the director of the charity! Just invite me.'

'Yes!' he replied as we both laughed. He stated that I would have to be officially voted in by the rest of the board at the next AGM, which was to take place Dec 26th, 2018 in New York City.

'I will be there!' I declared confidently, half-jokingly, half bewildered.

'I have not the faintest idea how,' I thought to myself, but I knew that somehow I would.

As I hung up from our call I laughed at the craziness of the thought. The date on my iPhone read Nov 28th, 2018.

I had just under one month to pull a miracle out of the ether, or more accurately, allow the miracle to find me. 'Ok...' I thought, taking a deep breath. 'Ok.'

The events that manifested from that day up until today, have been nothing short of Divine Intervention.

Not only did I go to New York, but I stayed at a family friend's apartment in the centre of Manhattan. Although we had been lifelong friends, it never dawned on me he cared for me that much but he did.

The AGM happened to be held at the top of the Empire State Building (um, yes, officially WOW!). I happened to 'check in' via Facebook, with the Empire State Building location, totally naïve to the fact that the meeting was actually to be held at the top floor! All I knew was the name of the café nearby and that I was told to bring my passport, as these meetings were quite 'official.' To be welcomed to a board meeting on top of the Empire State Building by a stranger I met on Facebook weeks earlier was extraordinary. To be unanimously voted in officially by all members of the board, and to be able to assist in a project that is close to my heart (access to education) was beyond a humbling experience.

Thousands of dollars have since been donated by my community and conversations about larger scale projects are in discussions.

Two weeks after my arrival back home to Australia, two high-paying clients signed with me for long-term engagements. Ironically, both were women based in USA.

My consulting business was officially launched, with little money to my name, no email list and my family and friends at that time thought I had 'lost it.'

I went on to forge a business networking group that has been running successfully for almost two years, both offline and online. And of course, the creation and execution of this book (which I could in fact write another book about).

Since then I have been blessed to have mentored lawyers, graphic designers, therapists, writers, counsellors and healers, helping them to create more meaningful life experiences, and emotional intimacy, both personally and professionally. Plus my favourite - to value themselves by charging more, working less hours and having more confidence and impact.

My legacy?

Showing up wholeheartedly in every interaction, every single day.

Today may be the last day to 'move!'

The year was 2018. I was 37 years old.

The Business Lesson?

Kismet

Business Success Level Emotionally and Spiritually:

9/10

Business Success Level Financially: 7/10

The day I decided to be a businesswoman...

The Valued Self

What positive changes might occur if I placed more energy on the individuals who value me the most?

I awoke to a throbbing pain shooting through my left hip, down to my ankle that had been sprained six months prior.

Despite the fact that the past six months had been touched by 'divine intervention', life still had to play out and the events that occurred would still take time to shift from trauma to a place of acceptance.

My old fears of 'not being good enough', often referred to by entrepreneurs as 'Imposter Syndrome' began to kick in. After years of hiding away, I felt I was not worthy enough to have the guy, the career and the health (hence the ankle injury). One or two was ok but not all three! 'Hello self-sabotage my dear friend!'

This residual fear led to a decision that followed this logic...

'As my consulting practice grows, I need to have extra cash flow to support my life.'

A previous workplace was nearby and I decided to walk in to say 'Hello.' They invited me back on a part time basis. I am still not entirely sure why I was there and why I said 'Yes,' but I did.

Eight loooooong and boring weeks later I was exhausted. The foot traffic had died down and the excitement this place had once held for me was long gone. Plus, the work involved almost eight hours of mostly standing after an injury and earning maybe \$30 an hour - what was I thinking?!

That morning I awoke in pain - not just physically but emotionally and mentally. With much anxiety I made the call to my boss, who I admired. Thankfully, I was only a casual and she was and is a professional. We wished each other well and said our goodbyes.

I stood up. Well, I wobbled up. Scared but proud.

The next day I signed my third high-paying client.

I was finally beginning to really value myself!

The year was 2019. I was 38 years old.

The Business Lesson?

Self-Love and Self-Care

Business Success Level Emotionally and Spiritually:

9/10

Business Success Level Financially: 6/10

The day I decided to be a businesswoman...

The Ecological Self

If you felt 'I belong' in every room you entered in your experience of life, how might you show up?

'Ah, this is a good one!' The Nazi officer slapped the naked and terrified 16-year-old woman on her buttocks. He pointed left, which meant she would go to work for the Nazis, making airplanes. Right meant the gas chambers and death.

Although the young woman got the green light to turn left and live, her mother, father and brother did not have that same opportunity.

That woman was my Nanna and that story is my retelling after hearing it dozens of times over the years.

Growing up in what my mother called a 'Second-generation Holocaust survivor family' was really dark emotionally. There was a continuous undertone of anxiety in the air, 24/7.

As I came of age, that story developed and had taken on a life of its own. It took years of various therapies, alternative healing and family constellations¹⁶ to reveal this truth:

'I don't have to be the most beautiful or the smartest woman in the room in order to survive!'

16 Wikipedia - Family Constellations, also known as Systemic Constellations and Systemic Family Constellations, alternative therapeutic method which draws on elements of family systems therapy.

‘What?!’

Let me explain. That story had morphed itself in my mind over time and had created a virus that had subconsciously infected a large majority of my personal and professional decisions.

It turns out, after much mental ‘unpacking’, that my Nanna’s journey had travelled through time. A large part of me had processed that story and her journey like this:

‘Nanna survived Nazi Germany because she was beautiful and smart.’

Which I had processed as; ‘To survive in life and business, I must be the most beautiful and the smartest!’

Sadly, I spent years walking out of dates, meetings and even job interviews. If I noticed a woman who I deemed to be more beautiful or smarter than me, I would find an excuse to exit stage left. Often I even became physically unwell, to the point I felt I might actually die.

This of course was never consciously understood, but it was nonetheless real and let’s be honest – really sad and ridiculous!

After training in a stream of NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) that focuses on self-discovery and life discovery¹⁷ I became acutely aware of this behaviour.

17 Carl Buchheit, NLP Marin, Competencies of NLP (San Rafael, 2012)

This has been a gift, in hindsight. I now have the ability to quickly identify these patterns in my clients. They show up often in the form of money blocks or, more specifically, not being able to charge more money or being afraid to ask and expect more from their clients. Once these 'insidious behaviours' as I see them, are called out, the behaviour ceases to exist or at least, subsides dramatically.

That is the main reason that every successful business owner has at least one mentor. Sometimes even several, who can see the world outside of their own ecology, thus lovingly pointing out any blind spots that we ourselves will never see.

When Nanna died back in 2010 I let my family members take whatever they wanted of her belongings. All I asked was that I keep her beautifully framed poem, 'Desiderata'.¹⁸

I asked her one day in my early twenties why she hung it front and centre in her living room?

Her answer (in her delightful Hungarian accent) 'My darling, 'sis line, read 'sis line...'

"You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here."

18 Desiderata, Found in Old Saint Paul's Church, Baltimore; Dated 1692

The year was 2002. I was 21 years old.

The Business Lesson?

Life and Business Are Privileges

Business Success Level Emotionally and Spiritually:

10/10

Business Success Level Financially: 0/10

The day I decided to be a businesswoman...

The Sexual Self

Who would I be in the world if I gave myself full permission to express myself unashamedly?

Despite the obvious fact that many will question why this topic is even in a business book let me dispel any misconceptions.

We are human. Sex is a part of the human tapestry of life.

We arrived here by some miraculous set of circumstances that began on a physical level with a primal act. Best case scenario the act was loving and kind. Worst case - unloving and unkind. Nevertheless, it is why we exist and to ignore this fact would go against the sentiment of this entire book.

With respect to every individual whether currently abstinent, involved sexually with one partner or several (polyamory). I share from personal and professional experience that a loving connection to your sexual self whether expressed physically or just through self inquiry by thoughts and meditation, can encourage deep healing and creativity. In a study by Jens Forster and his colleagues, it was discovered that high 'creative solutions' were found within participants who were thinking lovingly about sexual intimacy.¹⁹ This is not to suggest you delve into this arena during office hours, but rather to inspire further personal development in your own time and in your own way.

¹⁹ Jens Forster and colleagues as seen in Scott Barry Kaufman's article 'Love, Lust and Creativity' Psychology Today (Sussex Publishers, 2020)

For any reader who may feel emotional triggered as you glance upon these words (and there will be a few) I recommend, as I do my clients that you seek professional assistance via a qualified mental health care professional or alternative therapist who is highly educated and experienced in these matters. Many times the heightened emotions are based on an often negative association to sexual matters due to a variety of reasons. The most common are past abuse or trauma in mild to severe forms.

For any reader who is currently on an active spiritual path, I encourage that you research with due diligence a practice that awakens your Kundalini in a safe and gentle way²⁰. Many misconceptions remain about this topic. Without proper guidance it is common to experience Kundalini Syndrome which can impact (quite severely) one's physical and mental state. The practice I recommend as it is safe, gentle and requires no sexual contact whatsoever is Reiki Tummo by Irmansyah Effendi.²¹

Creative expression and the link to business success

In my business, I work predominantly with women and in some cases their husbands and partners. I have witnessed that both men and women carry much guilt and shame around this topic. Women often emotionally stuck in their role as mother, wife or caregiver or re discovering themselves through alternative sub cultures that advocate Goddess expression or the rise of the Divine Feminine via Tantra

20 Learn about Kundalini by reading the book mentioned in section 20 of the footnotes

21 Irmansyah Effendi, Reiki Tummo - An effective technique for health and happiness (Yayasan Padmajaya Press, 2020)

or other techniques. Men often left feeling extreme frustration in the face of this ever changing dynamic and thus the rise of men's groups. Understanding the sexual self will assist us in integrating and accepting our fears around sexuality. Thus, we free ourselves internally to have deeper, more connected personal and professional relationships.

Life is full of creations, take for example the creation of this book, the creation of the stories that were based on the creation of the businesses. And of course, the creations of the individuals behind the businesses.

I wish to **create** a dialogue that revives the innocence, purity and beauty of sex as a means to heal and express creatively. I decided to conduct my own research with my clients by fostering a safe space that organically opens up a dialogue for more private matters. These were done in 1-1 sessions and small groups. I wish to clarify here that this is not an area I delve deeply into as I do not believe I am qualified enough, however, I feel it important to honour them as when these matters are kept secret, they can lead to repression which overtime creates awkwardness, confusion and overwhelm.

What I discovered was profound. My clients reported not only 'better and more intimate sex' but that they were attracting clients who were easier to work with and were paying more money. It also inspired my clients to create their own books, webinars, programs and in one instance, the appointment of a leadership position in a competitive industry body!

I realised I was giving them **full permission to express themselves unashamedly.**

This was having a ripple effect and increasing their levels of confidence and self esteem both of which are paramount in selling and negotiating. Furthermore, as they were growing, they were meeting with stakeholders who in the past would have triggered them resulting in total avoidance of the situation (and in business that means money left on the table). It was also showing them in subtle ways how some individuals were attempting to manipulate via false promises or other insidious behaviours that take place when one feels that they have power over another. Let me cut to the chase - sex and money are powerful! When we have made peace with our inner unresolved sex or money blocks and have integrated our masculine and feminine energies - business tends to flourish in a respectful, honest and heart centred way.

My first creative memory and the very first day I ever decided to be a businesswoman...

It was a beautiful spring day. The kind of day where the clouds look like fluffy cushions sitting in the sky. The sweet scent of jasmine hung in the air and the sun was just shining, brilliant and unapologetically.

It was 8.05am and I was proudly preparing for my day ahead. As I walked up the hill, I did not even have the slightest sense that I was carrying anything in my arms. Somehow everything had an iridescent quality and I felt weightless. I checked a few times to ensure I had taken all my belongings.

Flowers ✓

Float ✓

Work attire ✓

Laying the flowers was an act of sheer devotion. As I placed them down I carefully handled each petal, making sure they all stayed intact and loved. I delighted in the roses, which were particularly fragrant that morning. I spent a few moments noticing the colours of each bunch and ensuring that they were the perfect match. I knew I had to move quickly as the sun was shining brighter now and these flowers were not in water but held together in a special wrapping.

I began to notice the foot traffic was picking up, so I quickly counted my float and put my money bag around my waist.

'Flowers! Flowers!' I shouted. 'Who would like to buy some beautiful flowers?'

I had one of the busiest days that day. As I headed home with a smile on my face, I was elated at my figures. \$2.25! 'Wow!' I thought to myself.

I knew that day that I wanted to be in business. I did not mind what I sold or did, as long as it was beautiful and it made people happy!

The 'money bag' - mums old bag

The 'special wrapping' - foil from mum's kitchen

The 'hill' - the street I lived in

The flowers - picked from my neighbours' gardens

The 'foot traffic' my neighbours.

The 'customers'... you guessed it... my neighbours!

The year was 1988. I was 7 years old.

The Business Lesson?

Be Authentically Yourself

Business Success Level Emotionally and Spiritually:

10/10

Business Success Level Financially: 0/10

THE HEART CENTRED WAY

FOUNDED 2020

Our ethos is simple:

'Here I am.'

'So glad you are.'²²

We are a movement dedicated to continual growth in all life areas.

We understand the energy of money and know that it's a tasty ingredient in the recipe of success. We also understand the power of kindness and compassion.

Above all, we believe that a heart centred type of resilience is what will be required to navigate business and life in the years to come.

We know we will be kicked on our butts a few more times, but we say, 'Thank you, butt-kicking opportunities - thank you for keeping me humble, grounded, awesome and real.'

When it happens so badly that it hurts and you can't get up, we will be there with outstretched hands, words of wise, heartfelt encouragement and smiles so big they say, 'You got this.'

Welcome. Stay a while. So glad you are here.

THE
Heart Centred Way 

Business has shifted. Join the shift.

theheartcentredway.com

²² Based on the work of Rebecca Adorno (learn more at <http://www.rebeccaadorno.com/work/hydrophonic-background-noise/>)

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And of course, you the reader – thank you.

Q: ARE YOU STILL READING?

A: Yep, still here

Q: WHAT BUSINESS PROJECTS
AWAIT YOU?

A: So many beautiful
possibilities exist

OUR AUTHORS



Debbie Zita



Vanessa Thomas



Donna Sulja



Greg Roworth



Charith Bandara



Phoebe Lay



John Di Natale

REDEFINING **BUSINESS SUCCESS**

How do certain individuals

Make business look easy?

Thrive amidst the chaos?

Maintain integrity and humility?

Gain intimate access into the hearts and minds of 7 successful business owners through a model of inquiry known as *'The 6 Selves.'* Be captivated by a deep level of openness, typically withheld in business settings, along with a level of diversity across genders, industries, ages and business stages. This diversity is the heart of a new wave of business known as 'the heart centred way.' Learn to access a deeper level of self leadership via compassion, kindness, strength and resilience. The results of which are not only an increase in your financial profit, but an increase in enjoyment with all aspects of daily life.

Debbie Zita

This book takes the reader on a rollercoaster ride through a kaleidoscope of events, as each of the seven individuals tell their own story of developing life-changing skills to conquer adversity with the true grit that makes these inspiring business owners truly exceptional.

Rachel Cassidy



THE
Heart Centred Way 

