

MOTIVATION

MADIBA MAGIC

Celebrations will be held worldwide on 18 July to mark the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth. Here are some of his most inspiring quotes

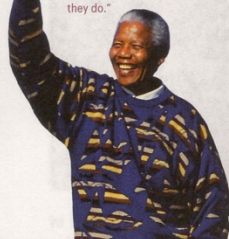
"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."

"A leader... is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind."

"The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

"After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb."

"Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to, and passionate about, what they do."



Sylvia Marshall turned her back on corporate life to establish numerous successful ventures of her own, selling one for a seven-figure sum. She offers her tips for going it alone at any age

I meet many corporate employees who yearn to start a venture of their own. This is often something they're passionate about or the result of that eureka moment when they realise that we're all expected to work longer than before and they can't envisage continuing what they're doing now for another 20 years. Others find out, often painfully, that there is no longer such a thing as a career for life.

Whatever the reason, going it alone can be a viable and life-changing alternative for anyone. I know this because it was for me. I am very much an accidental entrepreneur.

I enjoyed a corporate career as the training director of a global financial institution, but my world came crashing down when I was made redundant by my employer in 1992. My intention was to do a little self-employed work until my next corporate role came along. Job opportunities duly presented themselves, but I soon realised that there was no going back. My first business sold for a seven-figure sum and I was doing what I loved. Over the years I've learnt that, whatever the venture is, the rules of success are the same. I'd like to share a few of these with you here.

1. DON'T LET YOUR CORPORATE CAREER DEFINE YOU

Swap "could've" and "would've" to "can do" and "will do". It's never too late to learn something completely different. Founding my business Cosy Homes Online proved this to me when, in middle age, I learnt how to be an electrician, plumber, roofer, bricklayer, tiler, plasterer and kitchen fitter, passing courses in each discipline.

2. STRIKE A BALANCE FIRST, THEN MAKE THE TRANSITION

Retire because you want to, not because you have to. And keep working because you want to, not because you have to. Choosing a business that you can develop alongside your corporate career can enable you to satisfy your changing needs as you make the transition. Trading in the financial markets, for example, is ideal as a venture that you can start in parallel with your day job.

3. COMBINE YOUR PASSIONS

What are you passionate about? In my case, I loved finding and developing talent, both in my corporate career and in the first business I founded, a training company. My non-work interests, meanwhile,

included listed properties and the financial markets. Founding Cosy Homes Online, a micro-business, satisfied the first interest, but I was still missing the pleasure of nurturing talent. Founding the Zero To A Million Club to help like-minded women make a success of trading allowed me to do this while enabling others to future-proof their earning potential as well.

4. AGE IS NO BARRIER...

...except in our own minds. Start with a blank canvas – you can do more than you think you can. What others think of you is up to them; just follow your dreams. Last year I took part in a trading competition organised by forex broker AxiTrader and beat a global field to the title of Best Female Trader 2017. As I approach my 60th birthday, this is certainly not something that I could have envisaged back in 1992.

5. FIND YOUR NICHE

It's better to do one thing really well than spread yourself too thinly.

6. IGNORE TURNOVER AND FOCUS INSTEAD ON PROFIT

This is a huge mental shift from the corporate world. Know your numbers and concentrate on profit, rather than revenue. Micro-businesses are widely dismissed as "kitchen table" concerns, but it's 100 per cent possible when you're running one to exceed what you'd earned as a corporate employee and have time to do all the other things you want to do in "retirement".

7. DON'T FALL FOR GET-RICH-QUICK SCHEMES

These are often aimed at people aged over 40 who are particularly active in the property and trading sectors.



Sylvia Marshall is a member of IoD South. Her book, *Zero To A Million: She did it and so can you*, is out now

WORK LIFE

DOWNTIME

'DANCING GIVES ME PERSPECTIVE'



Eleanor de Kanter, founder and MD of Agensi, says that discovering a Brazilian dance called jongo has helped her

to stay on her toes at work. "My industry – digital strategy – is constantly changing and challenging you to keep on top of developments, which makes the job quite intense."

"I fell in love with jongo as soon as I discovered it. One of the great things about dance is that communities build up around it. It enables you to escape the work bubble and meet different people from a range of backgrounds. It gives you a fresh perspective on problems you face in your job."

"A lot of research shows that if you're constantly bombarded with information and you don't switch off, you reach a point where you can't process it. Dance gives me time out – I'm no good at sitting down in front of the TV. I can get into a zone and be in the moment while dancing. It's quite meditative and, because you're using your whole body, it's a brilliant form of exercise too."

"You can be a hotshot in your own field at work, but getting on the dance floor is a real leveller. Everyone starts at square one. It's quite humbling in that respect."

Eleanor de Kanter is a member of IoD 99. Visit iod.com/99 for information about the network