

# ENTREPRENEURIAL H E R T

INTERVIEWS  
WITH  
ENTREPRENEURS  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

ANTHONY M TURNER





**Interviews with entrepreneurs making a difference**

## **Episode 1**

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‘Keep your face to the sun, and you will  
never see the shadows.’

Helen Keller

# Preface

It's autumn 2016 and I'm sitting in my home office in the Yarra Valley just outside of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia listening to rain on the roof and pondering the world around and outside of me.

At this point in time there are approximately 7.4 billion people occupying planet Earth. All of these are categorised by statisticians in some way according to predefined demographics - for example, they're old or young, rich, poor or belong to the 'middle classes'. They're further sorted and defined by gender, skin colour, religion, country of origin (with associated cultural/societal beliefs) and/or by generation - baby boomers, Gen Y, Gen X, millennials or whatever.

Why is this important? It's important because it signifies to me an excepted process by which people have come to 'fit in'. They (the wider populous) have generally accepted the categories imposed upon them, become easy marketing targets for common propaganda about HOW they need to be, what they should buy and why not to ask questions and as such, have become followers rather than self-assured leaders. My contention is that this process of categorization subliminally determines peoples' thoughts and beliefs, how the human race behaves, thinks and how it needs to be structured and limits what people generally achieve in their lives.

On the other side of this coin we are constantly bombarded with all the things wrong with our world; stories from the media about increasing social and financial impacts of illicit drugs, poverty, war, terrorism, segregation that as a result, create mass fear and general human apathy.

Refreshingly amongst this negativity, thought control (albeit covert) and reported destruction is a growing group of young entrepreneurs who challenge the status quo, who challenge the current structures that are in decay and decline, who challenge commonly held beliefs about money and control and who are now seeking ways to bring disparate people together to create a different more inclusive and more sustainable future.

I call these people - Entrepreneurs with Heart because they operate on the basis of a cause rather than ego self-gratification. That doesn't mean they lack self-gratification. It simply means they derive their self-gratification from the differences they make and through service to others rather than through any financial rewards or accolades they may receive.

I have written this book (the first of more to come) to provide a vehicle whereby YOU and the wider world can hear their stories. I truly believe their journeys and their visions are truly inspirational and are a powerful potential catalyst for awakening these same entrepreneurial tendencies in many individuals with powerful ideas who currently stand on the sidelines waiting for the opportunity for making their difference.

I have also written it so you - that Entrepreneur with Heart in waiting - can gain insights from those already on the journey to help you fulfil your own destinies. Just remember, it's not about copying what they do; it's about taking relevant snippets from their experiences to forge a journey that is uniquely your own.

I have deliberately avoided providing you with my thoughts about how you can become or should behave as an Entrepreneur with Heart. Instead, I believe the provision of the individual stories of these 11 entrepreneurs, their journeys, their inspiration, and their reasons for why they do what they do are more powerful in better informing and preparing you for your own journey of entrepreneurship with heart if that is your calling.

One thing I have noticed is they all share in common is that they're ALL dedicating their lives to making a difference rather than making money. That's not to say any see money as a problem. In fact, Al Jeffery says, we have to be both at peace with money and have money to be able to sit at the right tables and become an accepted voice that can facilitate change.

I trust you enjoy their stories as much as I do. Their Interviews can be heard via our Entrepreneurial Heart Podcast and on our website...

[www.EntrepreneurialHeart.com.au](http://www.EntrepreneurialHeart.com.au)

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“Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes,  
the swing in your gait, the grip of your  
hand and the irresistible surge of will and  
energy to execute your ideas”

Henry Ford

# Introduction

It was December 2015, and I called in to see a friend (Barbara) who had just received her newly published book ‘Letters from Grandma’. Naturally we were both excited to finally hold the book in our hands, especially as writing this book had been a confronting journey for her in terms of reliving and dealing with the emotions of some very difficult experiences.

Barbara, like many authors (myself included) felt both a sense of pride and a sense of trepidation because now the world was going to see and read what had been kept inside for so long.

Naturally we chatted for a while about the book and the journey, the feelings, the outcome and about how she was going to take her book to the world.

As the conversation moved on Barbara asked me when I was going to write my next book. I remember saying I was planning to write another on business and how it was going to be a rewrite of materials I had already written. I explained how I felt the material really needed to be simplified so that it could be more usable by small business owners around the world.

To my surprise she just blurted out NO!

What do you mean NO, was my question?

Don’t you think it’s about time you wrote about the spiritual aspects of being in business rather than just the skills of running a business she asked?

I remember feeling distinctly uncomfortable. For a long time I had been keeping my spirituality in the shadows of my business world. Not because I was ashamed of them, nor because I didn’t use them in my work; but because it didn’t seem appropriate (in my mind) to be spruiking my

thoughts around how spirituality connects to business to people seeking to learn business skills.

Barbara in her inimitable manner kept pushing the boundaries of my discomfort and challenged my thought processes about why spirituality should be excluded from business texts rather than included. As she was talking I remember two words pop into my head - Entrepreneurial Heart.

I didn't understand why those words came in to my mind but I did tell Barbara what they were and then headed off home.

Home for me is about 60 km from where Barbara lives so it gave me plenty of thinking time as I drove. Ideas started to flood into my head during that drive about my thinking process and how, instead of telling my work in a spiritual manner, it might be better to uncover and tell the stories of the spiritual work of others.

The very next day I created a call-out on SourceBottle.com asking for expressions of interest from Entrepreneurs 'making a difference' who would be willing to be interviewed about the connections between spirituality and the work they do.

To my surprise and pleasure, 20 people from 4 different Continents responded to the call-out within 48 hours. Episode 1 had truly begun.

As I engaged with these people my context for this book changed, I became much clearer in how I would define an 'Entrepreneur making a difference' and what my expectations were for this project.

My original context was to provide findings from interviews as a way of analysing what makes a successful Entrepreneur and thereby recommend what individuals need to do to become a 'success'. I decided that it would be inappropriate for ME to tell YOU how you should be, as that would be creating a mould that is potentially limiting on someone else's creativity.

It was then I decided to simply put the stories of others in front of you so YOU can make up your own mind about how YOUR journey should develop and progress WITHOUT suggesting a ‘right pathway’.

In looking at the definitions of an Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship on Wikipedia I noticed both spoke of risk taking, leadership and innovation BUT neither spoke of the inherent drivers of an Entrepreneur or their activity of entrepreneurship.

**Entrepreneurship** is the process of designing, launching, and running a new business, i.e. a start-up company offering a product, process or service. It has been defined as the "...capacity and willingness to develop, organize, and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit."

The **entrepreneur** is "a person who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk." "Rather than working as an employee, [an entrepreneur] runs a small business and assumes all the risk and reward of a given business venture, idea, or good or service offered for sale. The entrepreneur is commonly seen as a business leader and innovator of new ideas and business processes." Entrepreneurs perceive new business opportunities and they often exhibit positive biases in their perception (i.e., a bias towards finding new possibilities and unmet market needs) and a pro-risk-taking attitude that makes them more likely to exploit the opportunity.

"**Entrepreneurial spirit** is characterized by innovation and risk-taking."

My definition of an ‘Entrepreneur with Heart’ is a person who exhibits all of the above attributes but channels their efforts into making a difference for, or providing service to, others rather than creating wealth for themselves.

I have deliberately attempted to both investigate and get a better understanding of the drivers of these Entrepreneurs making a difference. I was curious to find out if what they do is based around an inner calling, were choices derived from personal loss or whether there was some other catalyst. Most importantly for me was the exploration of whether there is some higher purpose or spiritual (however one determines spirituality) driver for their actions.

As you will read and hear from their interviews, some of our Entrepreneurs don't consider themselves 'spiritual' yet curiously talk about a sense of higher purpose or a calling to a direction or a desire to make a difference based on their own perceptions/observations of injustice towards others. To me this is a form of spirituality - just without the label.

I genuinely feel honoured to have met and talk with these people. I have often felt humbled by their passion, vision and drive to make a difference.

Most of all, I have felt excited about the possibilities of a future where these people are leaders of that future. They care about people, they care about our planet and they care about making the world a better place through inclusion, education and support rather than exploitation.

Most inspiring of all is that they are prepared to lead by personal example.

I trust you enjoy reading the journeys of these Entrepreneurs with Heart.

Anthony M Turner

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**“Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, the mind can achieve”.**

Dr. Napoleon Hill, author of *Think and Grow Rich*.

# Interviews

You will recall from the Preface of this book my first connection with this inaugural group of Entrepreneurs with Heart came via a call-out on [SourceBottle.com](http://SourceBottle.com).

My second connection came via an exchange of emails whereby I explained what I was seeking and asked each potential Interviewee to respond to 8 questions...

- 1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**
- 2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**
- 3. What is the 'BIG difference' you are looking to make?**
- 4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**
- 5. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**
- 6. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?**
- 7. Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this looks and feels like?**
- 8. Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?**

The responses I received helped sort out those who matched my key selection criteria of 'someone making or seeking to make a difference' in the wider sense - i.e. enriching the lives of others.

In the following pages we have provided their responses to those questions along with the transcripts of their Interviews.

We have also provided their biographies so you can get to know them a little better and their contact details so you can connect with each of our Entrepreneurs with Heart should you have a desire to help them on their particular mission.

In this first edition of Entrepreneurial Heart - Episode 1 - we welcome;

Akshaya Borkar - The Art & Craft Gallery (based in Australia/India)

Al Jeffery - Realise Flow (based in Melbourne, Australia)

Carly Evans - Coach Carly (based in Perth, Australia)

Dan Thomas - Image Doctor (based in Sydney, Australia)

Manish Azad - Fitness Freaks (based in Melbourne, Australia)

Phil & Janelle Sherrard - Bin Spring (based in Perth, Australia)

Ryan Ebert - PHW Group - (based in Melbourne, Australia)

Shai Wolter - Soul Ardour (based on the Gold Coast, Qld, Australia)

Shanley McCray - Opportune Publishing (based in Houston, Texas, USA)

Shannon Hsu - Q2 Dance (based in Sydney, Australia)

Vanessa Cullen - MoreThanPKD (based in Sydney, Australia)

Please feel free to connect with me if you believe you're an Entrepreneur with Heart who has a story worthy of inclusion in a future Episode of ***Entrepreneurial Heart... interviews with entrepreneurs making a difference*** via our website [www.EntrepreneurialHeart.com.au](http://www.EntrepreneurialHeart.com.au)

**"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."**

Chinese proverb



# Akshaya Borkar

The Art & Craft Gallery

## **Biography**

**Akshaya Borkar**, is a first generation Indian immigrant to Australia, who after living there for 12 years, started her first business as a social enterprise to promote Creative Individuals in the Arts and Crafts industry.

Being a self-taught creative, she understood the pains of the artist community and decided to use her Bachelor of Business Degree to support the creative community to ensure their creative skills are transferred to the next generation and thereby pushes the ‘makers movement’ forward.

Akshaya’s business started from a [humble craft blog](#) which she began during her first maternity break in 2010, which turned in to a social enterprise by the time she took her second maternity break in 2013.

Akshaya now mentors other women who wish to start their own online ventures and, apart from running a gallery and juggling parenting, likes to bake, cook and be creative!

**Business** - The Art and Craft Gallery is a multi-international award winning social enterprise supporting creative individuals worldwide. This unconventional online gallery was started to increase online exposure of creative individuals while reducing up to 90% of their ‘Screen Time’ on a very minimum investment. They were the first online gallery that is inclusive of all kinds of arts and crafts talents and offering these creative individuals a lifetime membership enabling them to stay connected online.

Apart from winning international awards in their first official worldwide launch in 2015, The Art and Craft Gallery has grown to a creative community of 155 artists from 10 different countries. Their artists have been featured in Huffington Post, WeekendNotes, Fashion Magazines which has increased both their visibility and business revenue!

Apart from promoting artists, The Art and Craft Gallery also publishes an online interview series with creative entrepreneurs who can inspire fellow creatives. They write blogs about online marketing tools and techniques to help educate creatives across the world.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

**1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

It's very uncommon for any publishing / writing or Media person to take so much interest in the social cause of a start-up or entrepreneur unless they are proving to be making millions of Dollars of Revenue. This is why I found your call out a great opportunity where we could talk about our vision of "Abolishing Struggling Artist" phenomena from our society.

**2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

Our entrepreneurial journey has been full of ups and downs which not only determined our vision but also connected us with many creative minds across 10 countries, and many well-wishers who believe in our cause of supporting creative individuals worldwide and propagating the creative industry in mainstream

**3. What is the 'BIG difference' you are looking to make?**

We are making a "Big Difference" to creative people who can flourish by gaining exposure for their creations without burning out or selling out! By promoting these creative individuals we are also educating people how being surrounded by creative works can influence their positive vibes and also bring the creative industry into the mainstream. We believe our vision of Abolishing Struggling Artist will enable future generations to engage in their creative passions and flourish like any mainstream industry today!

**4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

We are very active on 10-15 social media channels where we are constantly connecting with creative individuals and inviting them to join our gallery for free. We are also using Print and Online media to spread our vision by giving interviews to journalists on Huffington Post, Local Newspapers, SBS Radio, Regional Newspapers and radio.

We also have ambassadors in Australia, India and Spain who help us spread our message and connect us to more creative individuals worldwide.

**5. *What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?***

When I realized that art industry only in USA was \$40 Billion in 2014 compared to the IT industry \$30 Billion; and society does not promote/support a person willing to ART as much as we look up to IT graduates. We know our vision can certainly educate people to look at art/creative profession with equal importance and result in the ART profession getting represented in mainstream. This is what really motivates me on my entrepreneurial journey.

**6. *If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?***

Short Answer is NO, because we know that if we make an impact, monetary gains are always followed. So we only measure our success on number of creative members joining our gallery and getting flourished never on how much revenue we have made.

**7. *Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?***

I am spiritual person, however it's not connected to my entrepreneurial journey.

**8. *Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?***

I would like to invite any creative individuals listening or reading this interview to join our creative community for Free and showcase their creations to the world with ease.

## **Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Hi today I'm talking with Akshaya Borkar from India who is the owner of The Art and Craft Gallery. Akshaya, firstly welcome and thank you for your time. I've had the opportunity to get some information from you by email, but for the benefit of our listeners, would you tell them about your background as an individual and an entrepreneur.

**Akshaya:** Thank you Anthony for interviewing me and giving me this opportunity today. I'm very excited to share my journey with your audience today.

I came to Australia 14 years ago as an international student and stayed on. Through all those journeys I realised my passion as an artist. I fell into blogging in my first maternity leave in 2010 and that was the start of my entrepreneurial journey. So I started blogging all the art and craft things I was making for my child and family in general. And people said I should be on Facebook, or should be on Pinterest. So that was how I fell into the social media world and I loved it and my hand made business kind of grew out of that. Completely unplanned but awesome.

So it was a side business along with my full time job and once we decided to make that business a full time business, we realised there were a lot of other issues we were facing.

Basically with the website development and online marketing knowledge. All the marketers out there were very good with technology but not industry savvy. So they couldn't present my work correctly or

*the content they created was not relevant to the business or the keywords they selected was not really getting the right customers. So instead of them freeing up my time, they actually created more questions than answers.*

*I decided to use my Bachelor of Business Degree and corporates job experience in Australia for my own venture. So I decided to pull all this talent under one roof and create a gallery which does all these services for other creatives so they won't be wasting time in explaining what they have created. That all started during my second maternity leave in 2013 and my business really started when my second baby was six months old.*

*First, we were only in Melbourne and Australia we were doing the basic R & D kind of thing, seeing if this model works and what's needed and what's different service we can bring to the market. After one year we opened the business up to the rest of the world and since then it's been awesome ride. We have artists from 10 different countries now and in December 2015, I came to India because most of the Indian artists' wanted an office here because that's how Indians are used to working with businesses. They need someone to go and see and meet. So I'm in the process of setting my office up in India as a branch so I can move back to Australia and someone else will be managing our Indian branch*

**Interviewer:**

**So what is it ultimately that you're looking to achieve from your entrepreneurship?**

**Akshaya:**

With the entrepreneurship I want to educate the masses that art and craftsman's skills are important and secondly, I want to encourage artists and artisans to really value their skills and flourish in what they do. What I realised was in Australia, most craftsman's skills are dying because of technology and the older generation who know these skills are not celebrated enough, not valued enough, not supported enough. These people are not connected with growing technology - like the online world, which can really help them flourish. That bridge is my job - to connect them and make good use of technology to make them flourish, make the world know about their skills so these valuable skills are transferred to the next generation.

**Interviewer:**

**One of the interesting statistics you sent through in the pre information was that in the US, the art world was around about \$40 billion, compared to IT, \$30 billion or something like that? So it's a third bigger than the IT world.**

**Akshaya:**

Yes. That was my recent eye opener - statistics stated that the US economy in 2014 for generally did \$40 billion. And we are talking after GFC. Before GFC this was a larger number - and still no one talks about it.

My father said no, don't be an artist because I don't want you to struggle. Even in Australia when we talk to artists coming out of schools, or emerging artists, they're finding art is very much a struggle and often go back to part time work or some other job that sucks everything out of them. But they still do it.

At the same time, the IT industry is \$30 billion and

people say, oh you're doing IT wow. So I concluded this needs to be changed. What I then realised was that there are many layers in the art industry. There is the art dealer, art galleries and artist agents that control the economic or commerce side of the art world.

That's why the real artist get less recognition or monetary gains because there are so many other commissions and so many other people in the chain. So the transparency is not there. And that's why emerging artists find it very difficult to crack through the market. Whereas the IT industry I believe in comparison is very transparent. A person who's founded an app can get recognition, can get transparency and that's because they use their own social media and online tools at much higher levels.

That's the transparency I want to bring to the art industry because only then the money goes to the creator of the work. Once artists are celebrated, the next generation automatically look and say - oh my mum or my dad are doing art, I want to learn that.

My husband is an IT guy and my daughter wants to know how to code and she's only 6. Conversely, I was struggling with my handmade business and she said oh that's so much struggle mummy, you're doing so much hard work. So automatically you know, the kids perceive these things through their parents' eyes and we have to create a better picture for them.

**Interviewer:** It's very interesting. As you know from the pre interview exchanges we had, I'm looking to explore spirituality and the connection of spirituality to entrepreneurship. How do you see a connection between spirituality and entrepreneurship and what is that in your view?

**Akshaya:** Personally, yes I am spiritual. But personally, other than having a gut feeling if or a feel good feeling of helping someone and taking that persons journey forward, there is no other spiritual connection with my business. My business comes from only the point of, yes, this artist is genuine, or this collaboration or this partner will work. Those decisions are made through gut feeling or that connection to positive vibes I get from that person.

But other than that, all my other decisions are completely logical - logically driven rather than spiritually driven. But yes I have seen other entrepreneurs having a lot of connection with their spiritual side through entrepreneurship.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that passion is part of spirituality?

**Akshaya:** Yes. It is certainly but it is not the only decision making factor or way of connection, it's not 100%..

**Interviewer:** Is there anybody who particularly inspires you? And what is it about that person that inspires you?

**Akshaya:** There are so many people that are inspiring. If I have to consider from my business point of view and from where I have come from, I think I look up to Oprah Winfrey and also Martha Stewart.

Martha Stewart because she is in the art and craft

industry, or the media industry and because the amount of work she has done for this industry in the US is commendable, given the fact that she had so many legal issues and other hurdles YET she's still a go getter. So I look up to her energy and passion and entrepreneurs spirit.

And with Oprah Winfrey I learnt a lot about mindfulness and positive thinking and seeing her - a small girl growing up in Mississippi to what she is today. And the crowds she drew recently in December in Melbourne. It truly inspires me and tells me that the sky's the limit.

**Interviewer:**

**You mentioned before that you sort of fell into the business as a result of the blog but was there any other specific catalyst to get you on your entrepreneurial journey?**

**Akshaya:**

The Blog reignited my creative side and showed me the possibilities, but my past experience was the real catalyst in starting this venture. I've always been a creative person. I've won many awards when I was at school in India and my paintings went to London Galleries through national school competition programs. But after Grade 12 when I decided to go for an art school, my father was against this idea. He said, "No you will be a struggling artist, so we won't allow you to pursue this as profession."

That's how I came to Australia for my business degree. Once in Australia I saw people being so passionate about what they really love and so I started to pursue my creative side, hiding from my parents because they would be worried.

*So it was after a burst of that creativity in 2010 that I said, that's enough I'm not hiding any more, I'm putting it on the blog and see how I go. That passion, that voice always said to me you will be a struggling artist. That got shattered completely when I said no, art is not going to mean struggling for you.*

*I talked to fellow artists in Melbourne, went to craft markets and saw them doing amazing things but still not getting the recognition or desired output. From this I decided I need to change something. Something needs to happen.*

*So, yes it had that root cause of someone saying to me you will be a struggling artist and deciding that - it's not true. Then the passion of helping fellow artists kicked in and I focused my energies to help them stay creative, help them do what they love doing.*

*That's the real connection and that's the people who inspire me. I see them, they're doing what they love and they're passionate about it. And they're like - Oprah when she said she broke the shackles and she said she's going to do what she likes and she's going to please herself now. I think I went through that journey as well and that's how I connect -*

**Interviewer:**

**If you had to define yourself and entrepreneurial side of you in words, how would you define it?**

**Akshaya:**

*I think from my personality I would say I'm multi passionate and a laser focused person. If I decide I'll have to get x thing, I'll get it.*

*With my entrepreneurial journey, I think the last two years has been a very powerful journey for me, for personal discovery as well as how my personality has formed. It opened a lot of doors to me. I've met people I would have never met otherwise and that I think is both enriching and satisfying on a personal level as well.*

**Interviewer:**

**One of the things I've noticed in talking to other entrepreneurs is that many of them have some sort of a daily routine, or daily ritual to reinforce their success, their positivity, or to keep them motivated and inspired. Do you have any sort of routine or daily ritual for the same reasons?**

**Akshaya:**

*It's not really a daily ritual, but I'm conscious about being surrounded with like-minded people and constantly listening - I try to listen at least to one inspiring or educating video or podcast every day from a person who has been there, done that. I choose mentors like Jack Delosa in Australia or Lisa Messenger, someone like them, I read their blogs or listen to their videos or something that inspires me towards the direction I have to go - those kind of things.*

*But other than that, a daily ritual is not possible right now because I have two kids under the age of six so it's tricky to have a daily routine.*

**Interviewer:**

**Do you see this ongoing research and learning as being a very important part of entrepreneurship?**

**Akshaya:**

*Yes. I think that's the essence of entrepreneurship, in that you constantly evolve every day. Every day you*

*are pushing limits and there's no one to say that this is out of your job scope - of course it brings a lot of challenges, but those challenges makes you grow and after one year you don't even recognise the person you were 12 months ago. I think that is a really a big positive sign of this entrepreneur journey for me.*

**Interviewer:** *As a final question Akshaya, if you - knowing what you know now were going to advise one of your children - who's thinking about going on an entrepreneurial journey, what would you actually advise them?*

**Akshaya:** *I would ask them to follow four things and align them before starting their entrepreneurial journey. First I would ask them to find their true passion, which creates the fire in the belly. Secondly, they need to find the hungry crowd – whom they can serve or solve real problems using their passion and hard work. Thirdly, they should find a mentor or business coach who not only guides them but also supports them in this journey. Being surrounded by like-minded people and their guidance will really help them excel and laser focus their efforts. Lastly, I will remind them never to complain, because technology will change, life will get in its way, world will evolve. So they should constantly learn to adapt rather than complaining.*

**Interviewer:** *That's very interesting and very wise words Akshaya. Thank you for being part of this process.*

## Contact details

- Website: [www.theartandcraftgallery.com](http://www.theartandcraftgallery.com)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TheArtandCraftGallery,](http://www.facebook.com/TheArtandCraftGallery)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/CraftGalleryGal](http://www.twitter.com/CraftGalleryGal)
- Instagram: [www.instagram.com/TheArtandCraftGallery,](http://www.instagram.com/TheArtandCraftGallery)
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- LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/the-craft-gallery](http://www.linkedin.com/company/the-craft-gallery)
- Polyvore: [www.theartandcraftgallery.polyvore.com/](http://www.theartandcraftgallery.polyvore.com/)
- Wanelo: [www.wanelo.com/theartandcraftgallery](http://www.wanelo.com/theartandcraftgallery)
- Periscope: [www.perisearch.net/user/CraftGalleryGal](http://www.perisearch.net/user/CraftGalleryGal)
- Ello: [www.ello.co/theartandcraftgallery](http://www.ello.co/theartandcraftgallery)





**"A person who never made a mistake  
never tried anything new."**

Albert Einstein, physicist.



# Al Jeffery

2014 top 30 under 30 entrepreneur in Australia

## **Biography**

Al Jeffery is known as a creative facilitator of personal and social transformation!

Since the age of 12, he has been on a mission to disrupt patterns, both personally and culturally to bring about a world that is “together in gift!”

He has consulted with the likes of Apple, Australia Post, Telstra, Suncorp and many others on disruptive culture as well as spoken on stages around the world on the topics of personal wellbeing and peak performance, emergent culture and disruptive innovation.

Currently he is the founder of Base, creating Australia’s first collaborative living, working and learning space in Melbourne.

When not facilitating or creating, you’ll find Al reading, hiking, writing music, doing yoga or playing with new ways of being!

## **Business**

Al is currently the Founder and Interviewer at Base and Realise Flow. Base is a facilitative, human-centred organisation creating experiences and spaces connecting and nurturing people and ideas for a more joyous world.

They are currently developing Australia’s first urban co-living space in Melbourne to bring forth a new way of living together in the modern world.

Realise Flow is a facilitation brand that Al performs all of his facilitation, retreats, coaching and creative expressive work through.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

### **1. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

It all started with a strong sense of purpose and social change focus. Entrepreneurship and business was simply my medium of enacting and bringing change into the world, it was my vehicle I would say. I started in one venture, learnt a lot and moved to the next. I always say that I “Said yes to everything as I learnt what to say no to!”

Learning what is my natural groove and rhythm. What comes effortless to me and I am incredibly good at. I also learnt very early on how important doing the inner-work and personal development is as an entrepreneur. I started undertaking a deep personal development journey when I was 14 and have ever since. This has become a big part of my work as a Interviewer now and is deeply integrated within my work as an entrepreneur.

### **2. What is the ‘BIG difference’ you are looking to make?**

I believe I am here to create spaces, experiences and cultures for personal and social transformation. Cultures where people feel free to express their truest gifts and passions. Spaces where people and ideas are nurtured and brought into the world. A world where people are living in what it is that naturally lights them up and brings them most joy.

### **3. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

I do this through keynote speaking, writing, facilitating workshops and through my entrepreneurial work with Base and Realise Flow. Mostly though, I have come to realise that I do this most powerfully through how I show up every day. My life is my message.

**4. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

Change and social/cultural liberation ‘motivates’ me. I actually don’t like the word ‘motivate’ too much personally. ‘Inspiration’ feels better to me. I much more follow what is pulling me as opposed to pushing myself toward something.

**5. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?**

I believe that at least for now, there needs to be an element of enterprise in my work. If I am going to be able to cover my survival needs so that I can have the sovereignty to create and actualise my vision, in a world where money is our value exchange, I need to be making it. I am lucky to be at a place at my age where money isn’t an issue. I now have the ability to freely create with very leveraged income.

**6. Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?**

As a yoga teacher, Reiki practitioner and someone who believes deeply in something outside ourselves, this definitely ties into my work. I have always believed in something else which I choose to call ‘nature.’ I believe there is a force that guides those moments where things simply happen without effort. When you have gut feelings or intuitions that turn out to be pivotal. From quantum physics I also believe the physical realm and logical mind really is only a very small aspect and perspective on our reality. When I have let natural law guide me and have equal voice as my own inner dialogue, I find incredible things tend to happen!

**7. Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?**

That’s good for now.

## **Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Hi my name is Anthony Turner and today my guest is Al Jeffery. I came across Al through a referral from another interview with a guy called Ryan Ebert. I was quite amazed when I got to speak to Al and hear about his journey. Hence our chat today. Welcome and thank you for making time available.

**Al Jeffery:** Not a problem. Thank you. I love sharing at times like this to share the work.

**Interviewer:** Al, we've had the opportunity to have a bit of a chat and I know a little bit about your background from information you've sent me by email as well as online.

Our listeners obviously don't have the benefit of that. Would you mind giving us a description of yourself as an entrepreneur and why and how you came to be on the journey you're on?

**Al Jeffery:** Sure. I always find the question of what do you do or who you are interesting, but the way I choose to respond to it is basically at the moment I facilitate and I am obviously an entrepreneur, a creative so I run two organisations.

One is Base, working to create Australia's first co-living space here in Melbourne and another company called Realise Flow which I do a lot of keynote speaking, a lot of facilitation, coaching etc.

So both of these I suppose are working towards the exactly same vision, the same ideals, they're both just different mediums that I use to express that and

*reach different people. It is really about creating spaces and creating cultures where people have the permission I suppose to fully express themselves. To fully express their creativity, their vulnerability, connect with each other and support each other but they're in the best version of themselves that they can.*

*So whether that's creating a co-living space where people exist in a culture where they're able to freely create and collaborate and express and grow and give and play. Or whether that's through my coaching and my facilitation work where actually working with people to clear any blockages within themselves that may be stopping them from feeling freedom to express and freedom to be in their full power.*

*I suppose I came to those conclusions after a long journey of my own self-discovery and trying to come into my own expression and my own self which started at about 12 when I was sitting on a couch watching Jumanji with my brother and a World Vision ad came up on the TV to sponsor a child. At that point - I think that was the first ever television ad like that that I'd seen so I could not wrap my head around the fact that we needed to sponsor children when I was there sitting on the comfy couch with my brother watching an amazing movie.*

*So I wasn't present for the rest of Jumanji I would say, I was just in my head the whole time, questioning everything, trying to understand how it would happen, why it happened and how I could influence it.*

*So at 12 I started to question what has made humanity get to a place and time where we need to sponsor children with money in order for them to survive. At the time I was really - obviously quite naïve and quite egotistical as well and I had this statement that I'd always repeat to myself about wanting to be The One to make The Biggest difference in the world. Ever.*

*So I'd read a lot of biographies and autobiographies from Bill Gates and Steve Jobs and Mandela and all the world's greatest influences in their own way. Just to see how they did it and how I might be able to do it as well.*

*So that was the start of the enquiry into firstly what the undercurrent in the world is. What is going on beneath the surface? For some reason I've always believed that there's a lot going on beneath what we see. Beneath the physical, beneath the actions people take, beneath the buildings that are built. There's a lot that goes on beneath that.*

*There's the thought. There's inspiration behind the thought. There's something else behind inspiration. I've always believed that the best way to create long term sustainable change is actually to change the 'that', the root foundation.*

*So my enquiry was partly into that and what is that and then partly into myself and what is it that really has me being my greatest strength so that I can influence what it is that's the undercurrent to how we live today.*

**Interviewer:** You mentioned the movie and the ad particularly as a sort of catalyst for you to get onto your particular journey as well as some key people. Are those the people who inspire you or are there some other key people that currently inspire you to do what you want to do?

**Al Jeffery:** There's a number - I actually have kind of a little personal advisory board. I don't know them at all, these people personally but I'm really inspired by what they do, the way they go about what they do for different reasons.

There are people in the realms of business of entrepreneurship - like obviously Elon Musk is a major inspiration for me in terms of his absolute willingness to be audacious in his vision and not play small. After exiting PayPal he could have just retired and sat down for the rest of his life and lived an incredible life but he chose to put all his money back on the line and face some of the world's greatest challenges. So that thinking greatly inspires me.

But I'm also inspired by a lot of yogis, by a lot of musicians and the way that they creatively express their message and their truths. So I'm inspired by people who both do amazing things but people who also are just so in themselves. People who are so comfortable to express what it is that lights them up.

And people who are okay with just living moment to moment and in the present in order to find their own happiness - knowing that if you're out in the world working really, really hard to create something amazing, but you're frustrated, your anxious, you're

*upset and you're operating out of a state of anxiety. Then that energy that you're putting out into the world - is that actually creating a positive impact?*

*So you can be doing incredible things but if you're not being vibrant and centred and grounded the whole time, then I feel like it's not the whole picture that you're dealing with. So I'm inspired by people that have a very strong balance between the two.*

**Interviewer:** One of the things I read about you Al and you touched on it very briefly before - you started your entrepreneurship I guess - or the finding of self particularly at age 12, but my understanding is you also started the business side of it around that age.

**Al Jeffery:** Yep. So I - when trying to understand how I could influence the undercurrent, how could I influence culture and consciousness etc., I came to the conclusion that enterprise was one of the ways - and the way that I would choose to. I kind of gave myself two options. Either become a celebrity and be influential through fame or become a business man and be influential through business. Or both - like Richard Branson obviously.

After reading a lot of - I used to listen to Tony Robbins every night before I went to bed - just his audio tapes. He always says that to create change you need leverage. You need an anchor. You need something to pull and push in order to create a shift.

To get leverage you need to work with a person or an organisations highest value point. What is it that they value most? What is it that drives their decisions and their behaviour? If you can work with it on that level,

*you can have leverage to shift behaviour.*

*In the context of that I started to look at the world and the fact that unfortunately the highest value point of a lot of people, especially the people that maybe need to shift the most, or the organisations that need to shift the most, the highest value point is money. So if I'm not speaking in terms of money or I'm not dealing with money, then they're not going to value it, they're not going to have a conversation with me and if there is no dialogue how can they create a shift?*

*So I started to just see that the very point in time when people shift - where people hand over money for a service or a product is an incredible opportunity to create a shift in their own paradigm and their own behaviours and beliefs.*

*I also started to see that we need change fast. We need change faster than ever. If we can't scale our work or scale our product or service by raising money or being investable or just simply growing fast, then maybe we're not going to be able to change fast enough. So it makes sense to be sustainable and be able to make money from what you're doing. Otherwise I'm going to struggle to put food on the table and I can't make what it is I love doing my actual work.*

*So I decided to get into business and started my first one at 12 which was an online guitar accessory and guitar string store with a percentage of profits going to the Australian Orangutan Project because I was incredibly passionate about conservation.*

*From there it just went from one thing to another. I always say that I just said yes to everything - to every idea or opportunity that came towards me. Until I worked out what to say no to because now I really believe being able to say no is incredibly important. But in the beginning I just said yes to everything to try it all on, really checking with myself and see how it felt and then learnt to say not to certain things after that.*

**Interviewer:**

***So how long did that go for and what did you do next? What I'm trying to do is give listeners an idea of the chronology of what you've done, bearing in mind you and I know you're still under 25.***

**Al Jeffery:**

*So I basically was in business in a couple of different ventures until I was 14. Then I decided to take a break. I realised very early on that as an entrepreneur, you are - in the beginning, your results rely on you. Any blockages, any fears, any beliefs within yourself, they show up in your business. So if I don't work on myself then I'm limiting my business, I'm limiting the impact that I have on the world so I need to work on myself.*

*So at 14 I took a bit of a break and became a seminar junkie. Just went to personal development seminars with Tony Robbins, Di Martini, Ben Harvey etc. every weekend during high school and had no social life whatsoever.*

*My friends would call me up and ask if I wanted to go to a party and I'd say no sorry I've got to go to a meeting or I've got to go to a seminar. I was just absorbed in personal development which was great.*

*But then I got to 16 years old and realised that this is cool. I've learnt a lot. I've grown a tonne but it's time to put my foot on the ground again and get doing something.*

*Because I believe - and this is what Tony Robbin says all the time as well. Knowledge - a lot of people think that knowledge is power but knowledge is potential power. Its potential energy. Until you activate or actually put your energy into something then it's only potential. So I wanted to really get my foot back in the ground. I'd learnt a lot about myself obviously through that personal development journey of becoming a seminar junkie.*

*So I started up a clothing brand and then I was very absorbed in I think becoming - still the story of becoming the one that creates the biggest change in the world. I actually wrote a book about myself when I was 14, trying to plan out my life.*

*So I wrote a book about I'd get up at this time. I'd look across the pillow and see this person. I'd look out the window and see this. I'd go to work and talk to these people about these sort things.*

*Just because I didn't see many people living the life that they wanted simply because they didn't know what that looked like. So I wrote a whole book which I called My Drive which was all of that. I was very much living in that story. Because of all my personal development stuff I became very lonely throughout my teenage years. I had no real friends. Everyone was just a business contact or a business colleague and I felt great within myself but every time I went - I*

wanted to call someone to go for a bike ride or something I didn't know who to call.

So things started to shift when I was about 17 - and this is where things started to balance out between what some people call the doing and the being. And like I was alluding to before - doing a lot of stuff and being busy as a business man and getting shit done and moving is great but I started to realise that I need balance and I need to get out of my head a little bit more and into myself. The personal development journey was great but it hadn't finished.

So I - in 2014 - so I was 19 at the time - was chosen to go to Watson University in Colorado as one of ten entrepreneurs from ten different countries around the world. It's a start up incubator but they incubate the people rather than the idea.

During that journey I just learnt so much about the importance of letting go of your expectations. Letting go of really clinging on to your goals so tightly that you don't even let them come to you because you're always stressed. You're always anxious. You're always pushing yourself to get there. Started to let go a little bit more to what I actually love and what I - what fuels me in every moment.

Because I remember pushing really hard to live in this story of being the greatest entrepreneur that creates the biggest change. But that just created a lot of anxiety and loneliness.

So when I let go of that a little bit more and starting spending more time playing guitar, going rock

*climbing or hiking, doing yoga and really only focussing on the work that I loved most and that I do best at is when things started to really shift a lot more.*

*My first Ted talk in Colorado kind of took place very organically and spontaneously after this whole shift occurred. I remember setting the intention at the beginning of 2014 that I'd like to be on a Ted stage some time. I had no plans on how to get there but I was asked about 4 weeks before that Ted talk if I'd like to do one - out of the blue. And I did one.*

*So as soon as I let go of the trying so hard and the pushing and stressing myself out to get to a certain place at a certain time, things started to happen a lot more naturally. My journey went from being incredibly inspired to trying to plan everything out because I valued my purpose so strongly and I still do. But I'd planned everything out so much, pushed very, very hard - burnt myself out a number of times.*

*It got to a point where I realised that if I'm not in myself and I'm not happy and content in the moment like I mentioned before, then my direct impact to those around me and who experience me every day - if they experience me as someone who is stressed out and not so happy but is doing a lot of stuff - then is that really what I want?*

*So there was a very big inflection point when I was about 19 that shifted things into a much more balanced place between really focusing on what it is that I believe I'm best at and that really fuel me every day so that I can be internally in my greatest self and*

*in most contentment. But then externally be doing the work that I feel I could be most powerful at and really focusing on that.*

**Interviewer:**

*It's a very interesting story and many of the things you've just spoken about sort of touch in a lot of areas of what people often call spirituality. I have a personal belief that we are all spiritual beings and that we all are here for a purpose and you've touched in about purpose and a whole range of different topics. How do you see - or do you see business and spirituality as being and if so, how do you see those connections?*

**Al Jeffery:**

*Yeah. I definitely believe that they are connected and I definitely believe in something other than the physical realm or other than ourselves as individuals. When I let go to the planning and everything that was a big example for me.*

*I believe and if anyone was to look into quantum physics or the science that's starting to be put out there right now that physical matter - and so the you and the me - as in our biology and our physical selves is actually less than about two percent of what's out there. That's based on quantum physics. 99% is energy or empty space.*

*So I've always questioned so what does that mean then? For me the - if I was to relate spirit or I call it nature - a lot of people call it different things. I don't believe that there is a God or something. That's just not what I believe but I believe there is something and I take a lot of inspiration from nature itself that seems to flourish and evolve and grow and morph*

into new things second after second and almost effortlessly. So I choose to call it nature.

If I was to relate back to my visions that I now have in the business - for myself I chose a little while ago not to have goals any more, or not to have - I do have goals but I call them intentions instead.

Because instead of trying to engineer something to a physical goal - so instead of saying that I'd like to have x amount of money in my bank account, my intention is to now feel a certain way. Because I could have x amount in my bank account and still not be happy and most people do that.

But if you ask yourself five times why do you want money in your bank account. Is it so that you have autonomy? Is it so that you have a sense of control? A sense of empowerment? Therefore is it that you want money or do you want control and empowerment, can you not have that right now if you just choose to feel that way.

So I believe that - same with a business, there should be - like what I was just talking about then with the five whys alludes to shadow values. Beneath the physical realm, beneath the physical goals that we have there are shadow values or shadow goals that we have, that when we own up and sit in presence we actually become aware of.

So with a business, is your intention purely to make money or is it to have people to feel a certain way? Is it to make people feel more empowered, feel more in themselves?

*And I've chosen to look at things in that way. As to what feelings do I want my customers, everyone to feel or what is the intangible goal that I want?*

*Then I'm open to that showing up in a number of different ways. It can manifest through a Ted talk. It can manifest through facilitation. It can manifest through whatever it is but at the end of the day my intention is still exactly the same.*

*And I'm not attached to how it shows up because a lot of the time things don't show up the way we plan them to be but the way they show up is - in my experience, quite perfect.*

**Interviewer:** *Yeah, they usually turn up in the way they should turn up, not necessarily in the way we would like them to turn up.*

**Al Jeffery:** *Yep. Exactly but people still try and engineer things which is just setting you up for anxiety and not being satisfied. So yeah, I really believe in the - in spirit or nature as I call it - just simply in something other than the physical realm and using that philosophy to set goals and really keep myself grounded.*

*It's kind of comforting to know that it's not all up to me. That sometimes you can let go to nature or whatever you'd like to call it and just trust in it. Because it's quite hard just thinking when it's all on your shoulders.*

**Interviewer:** *I guess you've just touched on the key word in there and that is trust.*

**Al Jeffery:** *Yeah.*

**Interviewer:** I think for many people, we are educated to be distrustful of governments, of society, or laws, of each other, of neighbours, of religions. It's all fear based. Whereas what I'm hearing from you is actually moving away from the fear base and into love or acceptance.

**Al Jeffery:** Yeah. Yep and again I'll bring it back to nature - I believe the only difference between say us and a tree - we both have biology, we both have a physical part to ourselves but we have a consciousness, we have a conscience.

A lot of people say that our conscience is a blessing and a curse and I think that's very true. The only reason we fear - like does a tree fear? Does a tree worry about things? Or does it just happen?

So for us as humans, the only reason we fear, the only reason we worry about things and have beliefs is because of our consciousness which is programmed by culture around us, by our environments, by our upbringing etc.

So if we want to feel like we are in our own nature or like we're in our own power, like we're in ourselves, then we need to learn to let go of a lot of those fears. We need to learn to be conscious of what belief patterns are playing out in my life? How is that showing up in my relationships my health my wealth my career etc. because that is - what I was talking about before is the undercurrent.

I truly believe we don't see the wind till it rustles the bushes. So we don't see our beliefs and everything

*like that till they show up in our behaviours and the results that we see in our business and our life. So if we can be aware of them then we can just be a lot more empowered in the way that we pursue our journey.*

**Interviewer:**

**Earlier on Al, you were talking about the co-working space and the co-living spaces. I remember from watching the Ted talk - the Denver Colorado one - where you were talking about changing the paradigms of the world. What is this change paradigm that you're attempting to create through others?**

**Al Jeffery:**

*Yeah so a lot of it has to do with - say the industrial era where things - where there was a sense of control that was built. There was a system that was built which can be predictable. A system so that you put in inputs and you can expect certain outputs. You can up the price here and expect that less people will buy there. You could be in control. You could govern people.*

*That system also brought in obviously with the economy, a great sense of competition because if he has more that means I must have less apparently which put us in competition with each other. There's a number of things that that has led to.*

*Obviously a lot of issues with sustainability and the environment. Obviously a lot of issues with culture and our connection as humans which leads to - there's a lot of studies that show a lack of connection lead to addiction, lead to depression. Connection is one of those kind of core human needs which if it is*

not satisfied it will lead to autoimmune disorders.

And so we've started to realise now that we're in the post-industrialist era as a lot of people say that this paradigm or us and them, me and you, either or, this every dualist approach doesn't really work anymore. Because environmentally we need to share a lot more. There's no need for my next door neighbour and myself to own our own dishwasher, our own salt and pepper, our own everything. The only reason we do that is because of this need to be self-sustaining of this and on and sometimes fear of connecting with someone else.

So the new paradigm is less about us and them. It's less about competition, it's more about we. And it's more about how can we find a way to support each other and share a little bit more so that socially we're more connected, environmentally we're more sustainable and economically things are actually a little bit more affordable because there's no need for us to own everything.

So there's a lot of I suppose paradigms that fall underneath that. One of them is about connection and community and collaboration. The other one is about expression so the freedom for people to express and have permission to express their authentic selves without showing up to work and fearing that their boss is going to ask them to speak a certain way, to express a certain part of themselves at work and leave the rest at home.

This whole idea of having to fit, of having to conform with yourself is very limiting and very disempowering

*for people. And at a place and time where we know we can change fast and we need new ideas to innovate and solve problems.*

*We've started to realise and especially the millennial generation - the upcoming generation that if we need new ideas, if we need creativity and we need innovation - that doesn't come from a place of conformity and being shut down. They're disempowered.*

*We need people to feel like they can speak up to feel like they can share their most vulnerable ideas. So the new paradigm is all about expression and creativity and community and impact and purpose over profit which is very prevalent for millennials.*

*I see all the time companies and organisations are really a little unsure how to fit into this new paradigm given that the whole systems and structures and business models have been built on something very different. But it's very exciting to see that there are a lot of conversations, a lot of conferences, a lot of buildings filled with rooms of people trying to wrap their heads around this new paradigm because it's powerful and yeah I really believe that it's just around the corner from hitting the world by surprise.*

**Interviewer:**

***I think for those who are in and are serious in business, have to recognise that this is our emerging marketplace and if they're going to engage with the market place then they've got to understand it and work with it.***

**Al Jeffery:**

Yeah exactly. I do a lot of keynote speaking at conferences and in corporates around the millennial and this emerging paradigm and there's a lot of fear I notice in organisations because they're a little lost when it comes to this generation.

It's a totally different view of the world and there have been a lot of decision makers in these organisations who have been brought up in the industrial era. Where their paradigm and everything was all about conservation, competition, being the pioneer, being the ones that owned all the IP and everything.

So for them to then consider this new paradigm is incredibly scary which is totally fair enough. I really don't believe in - and again this is part of a new paradigm - I don't believe in it being that they're wrong and we're right. That's not the case at all.

They were totally right at the time that they needed to think what they were thinking. Because the thinking that they think got them through the industrial era. If they were to think the way we think, they wouldn't have survived the industrial era. So it's perfect.

But now it's just about how you can partner together so it's a smooth transition through the paradigms without it needing to be this us and them approach because again, that's the old paradigm.

**Interviewer:**

**Which brings back to a very common statement that I've heard many, many hundreds of times. It's evolution not revolution.**

**Al Jeffery:** Yeah. Exactly. I really believe in partnering and collaboration.

**Interviewer:** One final question. Is there a message that you would like to give to others who may be starting or considering an entrepreneurship journey and if so what would that piece of advice be?

**Al Jeffery:** Yeah. I really believe in alignment. So I see a lot of entrepreneurs chasing ideas and mustering up ideas in order to be an entrepreneur. There's a bit of a stigma around being an entrepreneur these days which is great but not everyone needs to be an entrepreneur.

So I see a lot of people whether it be chasing through newspapers, finding ideas and trying to find the next big Apple or whatever it is. I really believe in really giving your time to sit still with yourself, listen in and be honest with yourself about what it is that really moves you.

Because if you're making a decision about your future in a state that is very much in your head. If you are trying to engineer a future for yourself. If you're trying to create one from your head you will always be - and then you pursue that path - you will always be in your head along that path. You will always be trying to speak a certain way to certain people. You will always be trying to dress a certain way when you meet certain people because it's not natural for you because it came from your head and it was engineered through thinking.

But if you sit with yourself and you really feel what it is that moves you, what it is that lights you up, what

*it is that you do best, what it is that if there were no right or wrong, you would feel most inspired in doing. If you make a decision from that place, then the whole journey is going to feel a lot more natural to you.*

*Not only that, but it's going to feel a lot more exciting. It's going to feel a lot more organic and you are going to work with people who align with you in that way. So I really believe in taking time to sit with yourself. Take a moment which takes courage in this day and age where almost there's a competition to be the busiest person ever. So I would suggest people to really allow themselves to have the courage to sit still with themselves and listen deeply to what it is that actually drives them and moves them and be open to whatever comes out on the other side.*

*If it means not pursuing an entrepreneurial idea then maybe that's the thing to do. If it does, then just keep listening until something comes up but I just really - yeah - kind of ask people not to force an idea. Not to force a pathway because you think something. But rather allow a pathway or pursue a pathway that feels right because you'll be pulled in that direction and you won't have to push yourself in that direction.*

**Interviewer:**

**As wise people say mate, it's very easy to paddle a canoe downstream. Much easier than going upstream.**

**Al Jeffery:**

Exactly. The Tao - go with nature.

**Interviewer:**

**Al Jeffery thank you so much for your time today and the opportunity to have a chat to you about entrepreneurship.**

**Al Jeffery:** No worries. Thank you for having me.

## Contact details

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**"Do. Or do not. There is no try."**

Yoda, Jedi Master.



# Carly Evans

Coach Carly

## **Biography**

Carly Evans is the creator of Coach Carly and Phoenix Transformation.

Carly has worked with people across the globe from all walks of life since 2006, helping them to realise and achieve their full potential through powerful transformational coaching processes using principles embedded in Universal Laws such as the Law of Attraction and Law of Manifestation.

Carly is a contributing author in the bestselling Adventures in Manifesting Series in a book titled "Soulful Relationships".

## **Business**

Coach Carly offers Transformational Life Coaching through times of change, or recovery from trauma and crises. Carly works with individuals from a range of different backgrounds, from the homeless and drug affected, to those affected by child abuse, right through to corporate executives and those wanting to make a dramatic life change.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

**1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I responded as I am always open to exploring new opportunities and having interviews – I often meet some pretty awesome people by reaching out in that way. I would love the opportunity to be able to inspire/motivate others through this interview.

**2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

I have loved the majority of the journey, some parts of it have been frustrating but that really only relates to the more techy side of it which is not my zone of genius! My zone of genius is very much about connecting to others and helping them to move past the sticky stuff that's holding them back so they can reach for their dreams.

When I reflect on my journey so far, it really started when I was quite young... as an 8 year old I remember being on a family holiday in Scotland, collecting bones and leaves from the moors and setting up a museum in a shed at the lodge, and charging the adults to come and see! At school I made hair ties and sold them to my classmates. I set up my first proper business in 2005 and have run it alongside full time work since then, but have my exit plan from work well underway now! It was slowed down by moving from the UK to Australia and ensuring I could get residency here through my full time job, but now my plan is becoming a reality!

**3. What is the ‘BIG difference’ you are looking to make?**

Having worked in the justice system, mental health and also with survivors of child abuse since 2007, I am very passionate about helping those who wouldn't necessarily come into contact with a life

coach. I am really good at seeing the potential in everyone, especially those that need us to hold the hope for them when nobody else will. A hot topic for me at the moment is suicide prevention/post traumatic growth coaching and this is a space I am keen to niche myself in next year. I really want to show people that there is another way. Suicide is a huge problem and is not confined to a demographic, but affects us all.

**4. *How do you intend to get your message out to the world?***

By networking as much as I can, reaching out via social media and events, and just getting out to meet as many people as I can. Also by writing and having interviews like this.

**5. *What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?***

Being able to make a difference in the world. We are surrounded by so much toxic negativity, and I get so much joy being someone who can inspire and motivate others when they need it the most. On a personal level, it means the freedom to be who I really am – time freedom and financial freedom to do what I love and make a difference to as many people as possible.

**6. *If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?***

I would still be doing what I am doing now, but probably securing funding to do it. Even if I won the lottery I would still do what I love, it's my passion and I feel so blessed to have found so many things I am passionate about early on in life.

- 7. Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?**

Absolutely – my business started in teaching Reiki and giving Reiki treatments, a big part of which is constantly clearing out any negative energy holding me back. What that looks like these days is clearing limiting beliefs, doing energy work on myself and others, finding the lessons in challenges I am facing and keeping the bigger picture in mind from a heart centred place – always doing what makes my heart sing, and turning down any “opportunities” that may seem shiny on the outside but my gut feeling is telling me no.

- 8. Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?**

I just encourage everyone to follow the thing that makes their heart sing, that gives them goose-bumps and makes them smile. Your zone of genius is the thing you could be doing for hours and somebody has to remind you to eat you’re enjoying yourself so much! Don’t worry about the money, because if you’re doing what you love, the money will come – the Universe has your back!

## **Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Today I'm talking with Carly Evans, an interesting lady from Perth in Western Australia and rather than me tell the story, Carly maybe you'd like to give us, and the benefit for our listeners, a bit of a background of who you are and what you do and what your journey's been so far.

**Carly:** Sure. Thanks Anthony. I'm a bit of a mixed bag I think. I grew up in the UK, just outside of London and I got into personal development quite heavily when I was about 21. My journey started with learning Reiki and soon after that I set up my first business, Phoenix Transformation and I really heavily got into self-healing and helping to heal other people.

I've had a full time job on the side of my business, pretty much since I've started. I was working as a Probation Officer in London so really enjoyed that. I also started coaching a couple of years after I started learning Reiki and teaching Reiki and I started bringing my coaching work into my energy work as well which I found was really successful in helping people to release the blocks. I was also doing coaching with the probationers that I was working with, which was also really successful.

In 2010 I moved over to Perth Australia and had to kind of restart my business over here I suppose. I was not a known person over here in the energy field or in the coaching field. So the last five years has really been a journey for me in really growing my business, mainly face to face in Perth, but also globally. I set up my business that I would have time freedom and

*financial freedom so I wanted it to be global rather than face to face all the time. I've also been working in Mental Health over here for the last five years too.*

*I really specialise in helping people to release the stuff that's really holding them back. So their shadow stuff I suppose you'd call it, their sabotaging behaviour and that's through energy work and through coaching processes and tools as well. So a bit of a mixed bag in that so I've kind of work in a few different areas so I'm lucky enough that I love all of them.*

**Interviewer:** *It's a great place to be isn't it, when you actually love what you do?*

**Carly:** *Absolutely.*

**Interviewer:** *Carly, how would you define yourself as an entrepreneur and why would you use the definition that you choose?*

**Carly:** *I would probably define myself as a freedom seeker and a shadow mover. Freedom seeker I suppose for my own life, but also to really help other people find freedom and I suppose that I really do that by helping people really move through the stuff that's really holding them back. So I guess my own journey with that has really been - I suppose like the phoenix rising from the ashes. You know, really being reborn.*

*Having dealt with some pretty traumatic stuff and then moving through that and I think I've found my place in helping other people move through their stuff as well and create a better life for themselves and ultimately the life of their dreams.*

**Interviewer:** So that relates to another question that I've got that is - was there some sort of specific catalyst? And if so, if you'd be willing to share it, what would it be? Because what I've come to find in talking with a number of different people, some people intrinsically know they're going to be on an entrepreneurial journey and it's just the way they're wired I guess, whereas others have some sort of catalytic event in their life, or series of events in their lives that put them onto this journey because they want to make a difference. What would apply to you?

**Carly:** I think reflecting back on my life, I think it's probably a mixture of both. I've always had an entrepreneurial heart. I remember at school, I used to make these hair band things for my friends and sell them to them at school. On holidays in Scotland I'd set up a little museum from bones I'd found on the moors and charge adults to come in and have a look around my little museum so I always had an entrepreneurial heart I think which was really born from having great role models in my parents.

But then I suppose there was a catalytic moment for me as well. I always knew that - not necessarily that I was different, but that I had really quite deep and meaningful questions from quite an early age that no one really around me seemed to have.

So I really got into psychology and philosophy at school. Philosophy really gave me more questions than anything and kind of did my head in a bit. But I'd really sit on questions like why we're here, you know, what's the meaning behind all of this?

I don't really see - I don't really understand the notion of doing school, going to uni, getting a job, getting married, having 2.4 kids, buying a house and working in a job that you hate for the rest of your life which is really what I saw around me. Yes I want lots of those things but I thought is that it? You know? There's more to it than that - I knew that.

So I had all these questions in my head and then I met who I consider to be my soul family when I was about 20, 21 and one of them gave me a book called the Sunstone Prophecy and that really answered questions without answering questions for me in a weird way.

That kind of got me onto the whole journey of energy work and a friend of mine, he was a Reiki Master at the time did an energy treatment on me because I was having some health problems that weren't really going away and that was new for me. I didn't really get sick often. You know, I had the odd cold, the odd flu, but this was an ongoing recurring problem with my back that I couldn't seem to shift so she did a Reiki treatment on me and some of the insights that she had when she did that treatment were really interesting to me.

You know, she was coming out with messages I suppose, but she wouldn't have known because I hadn't had those conversations with her. So that led me on to learning Reiki and then teaching Reiki to other people because I really found my thing in that.

**Interviewer:** It's interesting that what you're talking about in the sense of what I'm exploring with this book is the spirituality connection to entrepreneurship and it's different for different people obviously. Do you see they are intrinsically entwined, or do you see them as separate or how do you see them?

**Carly:** I think they're very entwined, and I think spirituality is different for different people. I think it's very hard to define a lot of the time but for me it was definitely a very spiritual journey and something that you can't necessarily always explain, especially when it comes to the energy work side of things. Coming from a background of psychology where you take a theory and either prove or disprove it, it was something that I had to get my head around.

But you can't always prove or disprove things. You can't - just like, we know that air is there, but we can't see it so I had to find my own way of getting my head around those things and really connecting with my spiritual nature I suppose, when my upbringing didn't really lead me to that. I wasn't surrounded by spiritual people, I really found that in my friendship group and we were all exploring it in a different way and one that was really exciting and really intriguing and has never stopped being exciting and intriguing.

I think that - you know I've met quite a few spiritual people who are not necessarily spiritual in the way that other people might see spirituality but it's about connecting I think to your, your souls purpose, whatever that might be. And it's really about finding your passion and that thing that you love doing.

**Interviewer:**

**Yeah I would agree with that. I know in some of the work I do which is in training people in the business side of things, one thing we attempt to do is to get them to understand what their purpose is. Because if people are connected to their passion and their purpose, they're more likely to succeed and also more likely to enjoy the journey, even though it's not always going to be easy.**

**Okay so you've touched on this before, this sort of spiritual friendship group but, are there any particular people who inspire you? And if so, why do they particularly inspire you?**

**Carly:**

**Oh I have so many people that inspire me. Fantastically lots of them are friends of mine. So many people in my friendship group inspire me for lots of different reasons but I think integrity is a big one for me. When I see people really working alongside their values and having a lot of integrity in everything they do and I suppose you know the four agreements that could come in quite heavily there you know, just having integrity and living your life on purpose and just being kind and generous to everyone that you meet whether you know them or not.**

**I think my parents are definitely people who inspire me and have done ever since I was born pretty much. They have massively strong work ethic. They've built really an empire for themselves I suppose that has allowed them time freedom and financial freedom and I think what I saw in them was that I kind of wanted that for myself. They also have a really strong relationship and one that they both value and that us kids really value in them.**

And then there's other people that I look to - they inspire me in my business so people like Jody Jelas, she's a coach based in New Zealand and another lady called Denise Duffield-Thomas - she's a coach who trained through the inspired spirit coaching academy which is where I did my training. And they inspire me because they're just really authentic and real and that really comes across when they do their podcasts, when they do their video blogs and really any communication that I might get from them. They're really real and authentic ladies you know. I think that when I took the courage to be that for myself in my business and step from my original business which was Phoenix Transformation which was a brand and a logo and I used to write newsletters based on what I thought people would want to read, stepping into my then new business Coach Carly which is really - I'm my brand.

I'm authentic in that, you know, warts and all, swear words and all that's me. You know, people meet me now and they think oh you're just how I thought you'd be from reading your posts and getting your emails you know? So those are the ladies who have inspired me to do that and be brave and step into my brand as me.

Interviewer:

**Okay. So I'm just thinking through some of the things you said. Your parents - you mentioned your parents had a strong work ethic. Are they entrepreneurial as well so is this something that you may have learnt?**

**Carly:** Yeah so they run a business called London Hire and a couple of other businesses off the side of that in London. So from a young age I've seen my dad and mum work very closely together. So they work in these businesses together and on these businesses together and have a number of staff around them in those businesses.

I've seen them go through some pretty hard times with that and then some pretty amazing times with that. So they always inspired me you know, they worked really hard and I think my dad really inspired me to see the best in everybody.

Because he never employed people based on their qualifications. He employed people sometimes that nobody else would employ because he saw something in them and he gave them a chance and those people flourished because of that.

So I loved that about him, I loved that he could see people's potential and just roll with it and trust that it would work out for the best. So I think I've really inherited that from my dad and I'm really, really grateful for that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah I think one of the great things when you're hiring staff in businesses - and something that I learnt a long time ago and try to keep going - is you employ attitude, not aptitude.

**Carly:** Yeah absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Aptitude you can teach, skills you can teach. Whereas attitude, people have either got it or they

**don't have it.**

**What are you looking to achieve?**

**Carly:**

*Oh that's a big question. In my business? In life?*

**Interviewer:**

**Well I guess both because as you said before, the entrepreneurial journey is intrinsically linked, so I'm yet to find an entrepreneur that actually separates business and life.**

**Carly:**

*Sure. Yep. No I hear that. Definitely. Well I suppose, yeah they are definitely linked for me and you know, something that I have always searched for I think, for myself and my family is definitely time freedom and financial freedom to be able to do whatever we want and really just spend more time together and for me to help other people achieve that as well.*

*I think you know, on a question of would I do this if it wasn't bringing in money? I would definitely do the work that I do if you know, if it wasn't linked with money I think I really - I really get a lot out of helping people move through stuff that's really holding them back and watching them shine. And reflecting on what I just said about my dad, I really do see the potential in everybody. It doesn't matter who they are, where they're from, what background they're from. I've worked with some really, really disadvantaged people and I will always do that. And they're not people who can afford to pay me and that's fine with me. I really love seeing people shine and move through the stuff that's holding them back because it's just such an important part of growth.*

*I really believe in post-traumatic growth especially. People moving through some really, really dark times*

*and having a much better life for themselves than they had ever imagined so I think that's really important for me is continuing that journey for myself and helping other people with that. So yeah they're definitely linked to me. Business is pleasure a lot of the time.*

**Interviewer:**

**Carly, it's interesting you're talking about the post traumatic growth of the people that you know. Do you find the majority of them have had some sort of trauma or something in their life which has actually been the catalyst for their change to morph the world and / or themselves?**

**Carly:**

*Definitely and I've had this conversation with quite a few of my friends actually and that's - it's been really interesting to me that I don't think I've met a single person who hasn't been through some really quite hectic stuff in their lives and come out the other end just an amazing person.*

*The majority of people that I meet who are just incredible people have all been through quite a serious trauma. I'm talking suicidal ideation, I'm talking losing children, I'm talking losing loved ones and losing businesses and loss of some kind. Also, I work with a lot of survivors of child abuse and who go on to really make a difference in the world. And survivors of suicidal acts as well who are just incredible people, really putting themselves out there to help other people who have felt the same way.*

*I think out of that trauma can come amazing growth and I think that a lot of the time when you do hit rock bottom like that, I think the only way is up. I mean,*

*you can go the other way obviously, but most of the time, you're here for a reason and - well all of the time you're here for a reason and if you decide to take the bull by the horns I suppose and really figure out what the reason is and what the learning is from that, then incredible things can happen from that.*

**Interviewer:** *Would you agree that people who've been through that, who actually find that reason are the people who then really do live a spiritual life, it may be an ordinary life, but it's spiritual because it has that connectedness.*

**Carly:** *Absolutely. I think you can really connect to your higher self through coming out the other end of something like that. Definitely.*

**Interviewer:** *A lot of people I speak to have some sort of success ritual they go through on a day by day basis, or whatever it may be. Is that something you have or prescribe?*

**Carly:** *Definitely. Yep. I don't call it so much of a ritual as more of a routine. I think routine is really important, especially when you run your own business you know, so you're not procrastinating all day long.*

*My day starts usually around 5 - 5:30 and I kind of hear Tony Robbins voice in my head shouting Yeah, Yeah, Yeah. The way he does in his workshops. Just really getting me pumped and motivated for the day and I lay there sometimes for a while and just think about the things that I'm grateful for. Usually starting with how comfortable my bed is. How lucky I am to have a bed and have four walls around me you know because there are a lot of people who don't*

have that.

*And I spring out of bed and get ready to go to the gym and I usually have a pretty good gym workout and that really gets me motivated and pumped for the day. After that I'll have a nutritious breakfast, get showered and get ready for the day and usually at the gym I'll be doing some affirmations or I'll be listening to a podcast or something cool that I'm learning from. I really enjoy learning while I'm at the gym, or while I'm driving so that I'm not - I don't feel like I'm wasting time while I'm driving.*

*I think it's really important to figure out what your priorities are for the day. So I've always got as I'm sure most entrepreneurs do, a never ending To Do List and ideas list of awesome cool things that I want to do and achieve but when your list is so long it can be hard to filter through it so I always pick the top three things that I want to get done that day. I'll usually start with the smaller ones so that I've got that momentum going.*

*And then later in the day, once I've finished the work day spending time with my family is really important and I always figure something in that's really fun to do. Because I think fun is a really important part of growth and productivity as well.*

**Interviewer:**

**If there was something you could say to your younger self, based on what you've now experienced, or to potentially others who are looking to go on the entrepreneurial journey - so some reality checks about what it's like - what would it be?**

**Carly:**

I think that self-love is really important. So something that I would say to my younger self just about life in general is to really not work on everybody else to my detriment. Really give some of that energy to myself because I did spend quite a few years not doing that and sometimes - ended up a bit burnt out as a result of that. So self-love was definitely a journey that I had to learn probably about three, four years ago and really spend a good six months just focussing on myself. So that would be a lesson for my younger self.

In terms of the entrepreneurial journey, I think that probably my biggest lesson has been its okay to have a job as well. I think a lot of people think that they can just quit their job and just start their business and it will be successful, but that is so much pressure to put on yourself. I always had a job in London and ran my business at the same time. I was lucky enough to always love what I did, so that was a blessing for me. That I had found lots of things that I loved to do early on.

And then moving to Australia, there's a process of getting a Visa and getting residency and building a house and that kind of thing. I think the pressure - to put the pressure on yourself to just be running your business right from the start is something that some people do and it really does put the pressure on, so I think that was a lesson for me, that it's okay to have a job.

**Interviewer:**

**As a final question, is there anything you think I may not have covered in the questions that you would like to add?**

**Carly:**

I think something that's come up for me in the last few years, is having done my training as a Law of Attraction Coach, something that came up for me a few years after starting that journey was that a lot of the tools that I was using are amazing and do work, but when you feel really not very good, and you're maybe in a place of trauma, those things can just be a band aid. So it's about really uncovering any sabotaging behaviour that you have and really looking and exploring the beliefs - the limiting beliefs that are holding you back. Some work that I've been doing in the last year is really focussing on releasing those limiting beliefs for good and that is really powerful and really transformative and really helps to propel you forward in your business. Especially as an entrepreneur because there can be a lot of beliefs that do hold us back. Fear of failure vs fear of success and judgement about what other people think of you and that kind of thing. So I think those things are really important as an entrepreneur to release. That you can really, really shine and reach your full potential.

**Interviewer:**

**Interesting thought. And I guess we've all got that shadow side; that small self as it's called in the personal development area that does keep us back. I remember somebody I worked with at one time asked would you let a three year old child run your life and I said no, and having had three year old children some time ago, and they said but you do that every day. It took me a while to figure it out, but once I got it, it was those belief systems that we formed when we were very young that we actually play off in our adult life.**

**Carly:** *Absolutely and a lot of the time they're not actually our beliefs at all. They're the beliefs of our caregivers from when we were really tiny so it is really important to look at that and really do some reflection on that and clear that stuff for good.*

**Interviewer:** **Carly thank you very much for your time. It's been an absolute pleasure talking to you and you've given me, certainly some confirmations in areas and some new thoughts to add into the piece that I'm putting together.**

**Carly:** *Brilliant. Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure.*

## Contact details

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**“Don’t Compromise yourself.  
You are all you’ve got.”**

Janis Joplin - Singer/Songwriter



# Dan Thomas

Image Doctor

## **Biography**

Dan Thomas is an image consultant and first impression expert who works in the personal confidence industry.

Dan believes your clothing and image is your visual resume, and making the effort to create strong first and ongoing impressions can increase the level of professional and social success people are able to achieve.

Having a desire to help others Dan studied and became a nurse out of high school. However a burning desire to control his own career path and creative outlets led Dan to starting his first business at the ripe age of 21. Having started and successfully exited several businesses over the last 10 years, Dan has now settled into a career that encompasses all of his passions and successfully achieves his goal of never fearing the sound of his alarm clock ever again.

Dan is very excited to be part of this network of fellow entrepreneurs and contributing to a project he believes will make a difference to those who take part.

**Business** - Dan has taken his core passions of helping others, entrepreneurship and men's style to create Image Doctor which is a men's style and image consulting business that helps men dress sharper, feel more confident and be more successful.

In addition to this private consulting business for men, Dan also operates a corporate training company called Outcome Image Consulting in which he and his female business partner and fellow image consultant conduct live training workshops for corporate, client facing and sales led companies to align their staffs image with the wider objectives and missions within that organisation.

Dan's work has seen him feature in a wide variety of media including print publications The Daily Telegraph, Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, online through the Huffington Post and News.com.au as well as many radio and podcast interviews to discuss his expertise and passions.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

### **1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I responded to the call out as I'm a serial entrepreneur having started my first business at 22 and owned and exited several since before finally creating a business which serves all my entrepreneurial goals.

I connected with the vision and aim of your book and feel that I can offer some value to your process. I am also always looking for ways to build my media profile and was happy to appear in a quality publication.

### **2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

After completing studies as a nurse following high school, within weeks of commencing work on the wards I knew that employed work with restricted creativity and a fixed income was not my path.

I quit nursing and had purchased and begun operating a property maintenance franchise within one month. This was a green field franchise with no clientele and within 6 months I had a full schedule of clientele working 6 days a week and earning over \$2'500 per week.

I grew the business year on year over a 6 year period until finally succumbing to a chronic pain condition that had plagued me since I was 21. I sold the business and moved onto starting a B2B text message marketing business in which I would go door to door and sell an SMS marketing service to SME's.

This business was started just as the smartphone was becoming more popular in society and whilst a great product and service, I learnt that the majority of SME's in my target market were

commonly in the age range of 45 to 65 plus and the whole concept of smartphone marketing (which is now commonplace) proved to be slightly early and beyond them at the time.

In addition to this challenge, I was not a techy guy and also not overly passionate about marketing. Both these factors meant I did not have a strong enough desire to push through the pain barrier of an early stage business that was struggling to gain traction and I ultimately decided to move on from the business.

After operating the 2 previous businesses solely out of a proven need and then forecasted need for a product and service, the result was that I never enjoyed the work I had performed and was determined to change this fact in my next venture.

As a result, I finally decided to take steps in creating a venture I was truly passionate about and would allow me to be in alignment with my goals, purpose and vision which was to reach my financial goals whilst performing work I loved that helped people.

Image Doctor and [Improvemant.com](#) were born out of this goal, purpose and vision. Image Doctor is a men's only image consulting business in which I perform wardrobe reviews, conduct personal shopping trips and provide personal grooming advice such as the best hair and facial hair styles for my clients which I do in person for Sydney based clients and virtually for those interstate.

And [Improvemant.com](#) is a video blog in which I post up to 5 videos with an accompanying article per week on a variety of topics intended to improve men to benefit women.

I'm approaching 12 months since kicking off both platforms and all is going very well in that I'm growing month on month and receiving incredible feedback from all clients. And in 2016 I am focusing heavily on a separate yet closely connected business in which a female image consultant and I have teamed up to create corporate image workshops aimed at improving the image management and reputation of corporate and sales led companies.

**3. What is the ‘BIG difference’ you are looking to make?**

In terms of Image Doctor the big difference I am looking to make is to offer men a clearer, more systematized approach to managing their image which is void of the flair, trends and confusion typically associated with the female led fashion world.

However, the true difference I aim to make and have been achieving with my clients is improving the way they look and feel about themselves which increases their confidence and boosts their chances of both professional and social success.

In terms of the big difference I want to make through [Improvement.com](http://Improvement.com), this is a far grander and more challenging task however I am incredibly determined to help lower the divorce rate through my informative and educational videos and articles that allow men to improve themselves and the relationships and marriages they are a part of.

**4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

Content creation is key for me which I produce through my YouTube channel and video blog and then syndicate through social media platforms which is most notably LinkedIn.

By providing free, quality content on my areas of expertise, I am building trust whilst demonstrating credibility which has begun to and will continue to grow my viewership and client base and be the vehicle for me to reach my goals of earning a good income doing work I love that helps people.

**5. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

I operate on a very simple yet very powerful driver which is to never fear the sound of my alarm clock again for the remainder of my working life. This objective starts with being passionate about and interested in what I do which in my case is helping make a difference to people’s lives and the psychology of image transformation.

This passion and interest then fuels my insane work ethic which in turn allows me to reach my next most important entrepreneurial

diver which is to meet the lofty financial goals that I have set and will continue to adjust for myself on an ongoing basis as my business continues to grow.

**6. *If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?***

Of course it would, whilst my dream is to get to a stage in life in which I have created enough passive income to be able to dedicate time to seeking out volunteer and charity causes close to my heart, at this early stage of my new ventures money is paramount and the sole vehicle in allowing me to achieve my 2 key drivers of performing work I'm passionate about which helps people.

**7. *Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?***

I am neither religious nor very spiritual so in my particularly case my entrepreneurial drivers are not aligned to either.

**8. *Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?***

I feel that I have gone into a fair degree of detail with my answers and have nothing more to add other than to thank you for allowing me to contribute to what I'm sure will be a great piece of writing that I look forward to reading.

## **Interview Transcript**

- Interviewer:** Today I'm talking with Dan Thomas. Dan welcome and thank you for your time today.
- Dan:** My pleasure Anthony. Great to be here.
- Interviewer:** Dan just for the benefit of the people who may be listening to this interview at some future time, could you give us a bit of a background of what your journey has been so far and how you've come to be where you are now.
- Dan:** Yeah absolutely. So when I finished high school, I essentially in terms of trying to build a career, I wanted to do something where I felt I sort of making a difference on helping people and so I became a nurse. I studied nursing but essentially once I started nursing, I pretty quickly realised that I'm sort of employed you know, an employed career where I had a fixed salary and not much creativity wasn't really going to work for me.
- So not long after starting on the wards as a nurse I essentially quit and about a month later I bought a property maintenance franchise from money that I'd essentially saved since starting work during high school.
- Then I built that business up to be very successful over about a six year period. But I - throughout that time and since I was 21 - I suffered from chronic pain, a chronic pain condition that affected my back and my neck and that work was quite physical.
- So after about 6 years I sold that business and

*essentially my dream job since I finished high school was to be an image consultant but I just always felt it was quite an untested industry and especially for a straight man like myself and I just always sort of felt I couldn't pull the trigger on that career.*

*But when I sort of came to a crossroads with my back and having to sell that business, I decided to just go for it. I'm sort of twelve months in now to owning a business called Image Doctor which is an image consulting business where I help men with their style through image wardrobe reviews, personal shopping trips and things of that nature. So that's sort of my journey up until this point.*

**Interviewer:**

**Okay, so Dan how would you define the term entrepreneur and yourself as an entrepreneur?**

**Dan:**

*I think there's so many different ways - that it's such a broad term and everyone has got their own opinion. I think whilst this probably isn't as general a term that could be applied to entrepreneurship. For me I personally think that an entrepreneur is somebody who is so passionate about what they're trying to build that they're willing to do work for a period of time and maybe at no cost to them.*

*They may be going without a salary for a period of time or you know having to work around the clock in terms of the hours they're putting in isn't reflecting greatly in terms of the salary. But knowing that down the track their building towards something that will be something that will be or create a passion about and the [unclear 4:58] pump will bring them a much*

better salary than if they worked for somebody rather than for themselves.

**Interviewer:**

**So is the money side of it a defining aspect of entrepreneurship in your mind?**

**Dan:**

*Well I left nursing and pursued an entrepreneurial path because I did want my efforts to dictate my salary, so yes, definitely. But with my previous business, I was basically purely run - my path was really just projected by income. I wanted to be in an industry where I could work a lot of hours, work really hard and basically have the ability to build a strong income.*

*Whereas my new business, whilst 100% it will still be driven by monetary goals, it's also combined a wider sort of entrepreneurial spectrum of doing work that I'm passionate about that helps people, that will also - is financially rewarding.*

*So to answer your question, 100% but I'm now sort of combining a range of entrepreneurial drivers in addition to the monetary drivers that I have.*

**Interviewer:**

**Do you feel that's going to make you a better entrepreneur?**

**Dan:**

*I think that kind of comes down to personality and what you want in life. I am driven by money as well as driven by living on purpose and living in alignment with what I want to have - to sort of to put out to society and my contribution. But if you are somebody like me who is driven by monetary goals and achievements, then I feel that that's just another*

*benefit and another motivator that will sort of propel your business in the right direction.*

**Interviewer:** *So what exactly is it that you're looking to achieve? What is the end game picture look like?*

**Dan:** *Well I would say that - in a simple sense, my broad goal or vision with my business is essentially to earn - to meet my monetary goals in terms of the lifestyle that I want to live whilst doing work that I'm passionate about and enjoy, which helps people.*

*And I have another sort of very simple sort of guiding principle I live by which is that I never want to fear the sound of my alarm clock again for the rest of my working career. So that's ideally what I'm aiming to achieve out of my business.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay. So apart from the neck and back pain and coming out of that cleaning business, was there any other specific catalyst that got you onto this current path of image.*

**Dan:** *Well, essentially this business combined everything that I am passionate about and everything that I want on my entrepreneurial journey. I became a nurse because I wanted to do work that was satisfying and would help people which is what I'm doing now every day with my clients. I stopped nursing because I wanted to work for myself, dictate my income and not have a boss and be more creative with my schedule and my time and my creative sort of flair. So that's definitely what I'm doing now with this job.*

*I basically just combined helping people, owning my*

*own business and my own financial control as well as business and entrepreneurship which I'm incredible passionate about.*

**Interviewer:** *So Dan is this something that's been intrinsically in you, or is it something that you've learnt as you've developed through your working life?*

**Dan:** *As in, I'm sorry the - my entrepreneurial drive or my - with the style and image work do you mean?*

**Interviewer:** ***More the entrepreneurial drive.***

**Dan:** *Yes, so for example I really disliked school. If I don't have an interest in a subject, such as maths, science, anything of that nature, I just, I literally have no desire or inclination to really apply myself. But when it comes to all the things I'm interested in like psychology, human behaviour, image, personal development, I just - I read three to four to five books a week. If I'm working, I'm listening to a podcast, it's just, I'm very much a - very much seek information and personal growth as long as I am interested in it.*

*So I was always interested in personal development and human nature and psychology so that's something that's definitely always been an interest of mine and that I've taken an active interest in learning about.*

**Interviewer:** ***With that learning Dan, would you classify that as spirituality or would you classify it as something else?***

**Dan:** *Well I'm certainly not religious in any sense. I guess - I wouldn't sort of peg myself as being particularly spiritual. All that I sort of do is live by that simple*

motto of treat people like you'd like to be treated.

In terms of actively being involved in - definitely not religion and I really wouldn't say spirituality. Yeah, I don't sort of actively grade myself in either of those areas I wouldn't say too heavily.

**Interviewer:**

**So who have been some of your influences in the personal development side of things?**

**Dan:**

Like so many people I stumbled onto a Tony Robbins book which was Awaken the Giant Within which was sort of my introduction into personal development.

From there I really - my favourite series of books are Robert Kiyosaki - I started with Rich Dad, Poor Dad and I've literally read every single book. He's probably got about 15 books that I've really enjoyed. In the business space, people like Mark Cuban or sales and marketing people like Grant Cardone and Seth Godin and there's just so many to mention.

As I said I read up to three to five books a week and I'm always listening to a podcast or something of that nature. So yeah, I just absolutely love absorbing myself in to all that learning and personal development and business marketing skills.

**Interviewer:**

**Great. Out of all of these people you've been talking about, is there any particular one or two that really inspires you and if so, what is it about those people that inspire you?**

**Dan:**

Stand out for me is definitely Robert Kiyosaki and the reason being that he doesn't - he paints a very, very, very realistic view of entrepreneurship in his - my

favourite all time book which is one of his is called Rich Dad's Before You Quit Your Job.

And it basically just paints the most horrific portrayal of entrepreneurship which is his story, his actual path to his success and I always say to people who say to me oh we really like what you're doing, we're thinking of starting our own business, I tell them to read that book. I say if you can read that book and you still have a fire and a passion to work for yourself after reading that book, then you can at least say that you're in that realm or that mind space of being an entrepreneur just on a base level.

Because I really like how honest and how frank he is about entrepreneurship whereas I think it's become quite sexy entrepreneurship in the last five to ten years, when the reality is it's the single hardest thing that anyone could embark on but it can also be the most rewarding thing. So yeah, Robert Kiyosaki for sure.

**Interviewer:** Interesting. I've heard entrepreneurship as being the ultimate personal development journey. Would you agree with that?

**Dan:** 200%. There's just nothing more challenging / rewarding / developmental in terms of developing your confidence, absolutely developing your communication skills, a whole lot of hard skills that can translate back to a normal job if you didn't continue on the path of entrepreneurship. It's just incredibly hard but incredibly rewarding and developmental area that someone could embark on.

**Interviewer:** **Would you mind sharing some of what might have been the highlights and lowlights in your journey?**

**Dan:** Yeah. I bought my first business when I was 22 and essentially that was a franchise that had zero - a green field franchise with no clientele and I built that business within six months to have six full days of work per week. At the age of 22 I was earning close to \$3000 a week and within two and a half years I bought my first property and just continued to build that business.

But then the lowlight would definitely be - building that very successful business and it just crumbling due to health issues. But it was kind of like - I still have that pain condition, so it's not like there was a great thing, but it led me on to a new path and having to reinvent my career to be doing something that was more sort of - would lend itself better to having that condition. And in doing so I'm now literally living my dream job and I'm completely on purpose. So the highlight to date is definitely the fact that I've gone out on my own from first dipping my toe into the business world with the franchise which had that structure.

And I'm now not only doing work that I absolutely love and is my dream job, but I'm doing it as a complete start up on my own and having good success. So the highlight to date would definitely be the success I've had chasing my current business.

**Interviewer:** **Dan one of the things I often hear from successful people is that they have some sort of success ritual. You know, something they do in the**

**mornings, or during the day at a particular point in time. Do you have some sort of ritualistic way in which you keep yourself motivated and going?**

**Dan:**

Very much so. I have quite a few. Basically they're all health related as well as motivational. As soon as I wake up, I drink at least 250 mls of water. I then stretch before I'm about to go for a walk.

I then get up and I have a vision book, so it's just filled with all the goals that I want to achieve in my business, in my personal life. I look at every page of that vision book which is all sort of very visual with pictures. I then go and exercise.

I then come back and that's when I start my core day of work. I work right through the day and the better part of the night and then before I go to bed, I actually have a series of things that I say that I'm grateful for because gratitude is something I've always read in personal development is the - a really strong thing to be aware of. All the things that you're grateful for. Then I look at my vision book again before I go to bed and then I go to bed.

**Interviewer:**

**Do you have peers or mentors or other people around you who share similar views to yourself that you bounce off of each other?**

**Dan:**

Well that's often a challenge, working for yourself. It can get a bit lonely unless you just happen to be fortunate enough to be in a peer group of likeminded entrepreneurs.

In my case I don't have - I have very few friends that are in business. I do have a fantastic business coach

by the name of Andrew Sparks. He owns a business called Sparks Elite and he's just brilliant for me because we speak once a week and I'm getting not only mentorship but also friendship and being able to share ideas and thoughts. I do have some sort of people that I've met - particularly clients that I've met - because a lot of my clients just tend to be in business or entrepreneurs so - yeah not in my core circle, but my business coach and then some of my clients I've found that I'm able to sort of bounce ideas off and just talk about business. Because it can be lonely and difficult and it's good to have that peer support.

**Interviewer:** I guess the last question I've got for you is, if you had the opportunity to say something to your younger self or to others who are about to embark on an entrepreneurial journey what sort of things would you say to that younger you, or those others about the realities of entrepreneurship and what they need to be doing to be successful if that is their path?

**Dan:** The main - the first thing which I've already said was if anyone said to me I'm thinking about starting a business, I would honestly tell them to get Rich - Robert Kiyosaki's book which is called Rich Dad's Before You Quit Your Job. Because the main thing that he says really in that book if you were just to summarise that book which I was guilty of in my first business is that essentially I went from being an employee to pretty much buying myself a job as opposed to running a business.

And what I've done now through learning through

*that process - so basically I had an excellent business earning really good money but I was a slave to that business and as soon as, in my case, I got an injury because I was the business, it just sort of folded. Whereas I've taken the path now with my current business and also a blog that I run online to make different streams of income that I can generate as passive income. I'm in the process of writing a book. I'm in the process of creating online courses.*

*So what I'd say to people looking to get into entrepreneurship, is to try and find as many ways to build a passive income, or at least build a business which is more favourable to employing staff and that not being the ultimate headache which it can often be, which was the case with my first business. I'd really almost say to try and build a business that doesn't rely solely on yourself that you can still earn an income from and still have a life as a result of.*

**Interviewer:**

**In your experience, the journey hasn't been an easy one but what are the good take outs of it?**

**Dan:**

*Just that if you really, really believe in something and you really, really want to own your own destiny and to basically do work that you're passionate about, then you're going to get - life's thrown me a hell of a lot of curve balls along my journey of entrepreneurship but I've just always found a way to get back on course and continue on this path and saying as Robert Kiyosaki always says, just trust the process.*

*There's been so many times I've thought the amount of curve balls I'm getting, this mustn't be what I've*

meant to do. But I've just sort of continued to trust the process because a lot of other negative have happened apart from what I've just mentioned today but as I say, I've always just found a way to persist and continue to come back.

*My absolute favourite quote of all time is that losers quit when they fail but winners fail until they succeed and I think that's something that's quite powerful in entrepreneurship because you are absolutely guaranteed of failing just time and time again but if you stick at it you can really succeed in a big way.*

**Interviewer:** Yes one of the things I learnt in my journey is that failure is not failure unless you quit. Failure is just a learning experience of how not to do something and to help you find a better way.

**Dan:** Yeah I couldn't agree more Anthony.

**Interviewer:** Dan it's been a real pleasure talking to you. Thank you very much for your time.

**Dan:** My pleasure.

### **Contact details**

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“The Man who does things makes mistakes, but he never makes the biggest mistake of all - doing nothing”

Benjamin Franklin



# Manish Azad

Fitness Freaks

## **Biography**

Manish Azad is a Founder of [www.fitnessfreaks.com.au](http://www.fitnessfreaks.com.au) which provides easy access to nutrition and fitness products for its customers.

Manish is a firm believer the world is moving towards a massive shift towards entrepreneurship because new technology is empowering the common people to follow their dreams and get exposure to worldwide audiences. This belief led him to leave his corporate job and become an entrepreneur.

Manish has been greatly influenced by Brian Tracy, Robert Kiyosaki, Brendon Burchard, Grant Cardone, Les Brown, Deepak Chopra, Joel Osteen and many more. All these mentors have encouraged him to give more of himself to others. He always takes time to educate and empower others to achieve freedom for themselves in areas of health, wealth, spirituality and leads by example in each of these areas.

Apart from his Financial Services and Accounting background Manish is well versed with world-class marketing strategies including online and social media. He moved to Australia from India in 2004.

## **Business**

[www.fitnessfreaks.com.au](http://www.fitnessfreaks.com.au) is an online fitness and nutrition products superstore.

The team at Fitness Freaks works hard to make sure that their customers have easy access to the workout and fitness equipment they need to achieve their goals. We are proud to be an Australian owned and operated company located in the “World's Most Liveable City” Melbourne.

Fitness Freaks understands how busy life can sometimes get in the way of achieving fitness plans for its customers. That is why they offer a full range of name brands and advanced fitness equipment to address its customers' needs so that their workouts can be far more productive. Providing the best customer service is one of the primary focuses of the team who is always willing to help its customers with their Individual needs. Operating purely online helps save a lot of costs and pass on the benefits to its loyal customers. You can visit Fitness Freaks at [www.fitnessfreaks.com.au](http://www.fitnessfreaks.com.au)

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

**1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I would like to share my story as someone who has taken a plunge in the entrepreneurial journey.

I want to build relationships with high performing and entrepreneurial minded people and also provide value by sharing my knowledge and wisdom.

**2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

It has surely been an interesting and challenging journey so far. With real ups and downs and a massive shift in mindset coming from an education centric/salary based family values to learning about the life in more detail, then really trying find my passion and then finally taking a jump to start working and putting the hard yards in my dreams.

**3. What is the 'BIG difference' you are looking to make?**

I would surely like to be an inspiration to others facing tough times and show that there are really more options out there to succeed rather than what is being taught in school or merely from getting a job to get by.

**4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

I would like to lead by example and not only share my success story but also share and educate others about my learning's and insights to widen the horizon for people struggling to make it in this competitive world.

**5. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

I truly believe that the world is going through a shift and the new century is the century of the entrepreneur with technology playing a big hand in taking the power away from the big organizations and putting it back in the hands of common people. This gives us an opportunity to follow our hearts and passion and inspire others to do it as well.

**6. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?**

If I am able to help others in their journey or provide valuable advice which can change their world I will feel more successful and fulfilled rather than make millions of dollars and have no fulfilment and satisfaction.

**7. Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?**

I believe that the entrepreneurs' life is so challenging that it would be rare for someone to achieve something big unless they are attached to a higher purpose. In tough times you need to call in your higher purpose and seek help from the Universe to keep you going, maintain poise and go after that you truly desire.

**8. Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?**

I think that would be all.

## **Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Hi today I'm talking with Manish Azad who has an interesting entrepreneurial journey as do most of us on that pathway. But rather than me tell you his story, Manish welcome. Thank you for spending some time and maybe you'd like to give us an idea of your background and journey so far.

**Manish:** Yes. Thanks Anthony. I want to start with thanking you for giving me an opportunity to share my story with your listeners.

I think one of the major reasons for me being able to get onto the entrepreneurial journey is I see a big shift in how the economy - the worldwide economy is moving. So there's a big push for a shift you might say for people to move onto being an entrepreneur for themselves. Rather than just being relying on the government or a job, there's so much out there these days and there's sort of a negative push as well. Jobs are not secure any more like they used to be and that's what exactly happened in my case as well.

So I was working in a big corporate job in an insurance company and there was always a constant fear that the jobs are not going to be secure anymore and that's what exactly happened. But I was pretty pro-active in all that. I thought it's good - it's good it's happening in a way where I'm seeing the opportunity as well. Okay the big companies are sacking people or making them redundant but there's also an opportunity for normal people like me to go out there and find something to do on their own.

And the other side to it is the modern day technology and the information that we have today is very good. It's - it makes you feel empowered so that you can research any topic in the world or research any industry in the world in a few days or months maybe. And then go out and try what your passion is. You can achieve all of your passions.

I feel it's much easier today than it was before because of the technology as well as other information that is available. You don't really need big, big funds these days to actually set up a business. There's a few tools - you just have to search around and know more about those. Once you know them, you can eventually - you are eventually able to set it up - set up a business which you actually like and the work that you enjoy to do.

So my message to the world, or people who are actually struggling at the moment is that there's a lot more options out there than they actually think there are. If they are facing financial difficulties or they're in the situation where their jobs might not be secure or they don't like what they do, I want to send out a message that there is an opportunity for you to go and try out your passion, see how you go. Because there is everything available these days to be able to follow your passion and maybe make a financial independence for yourself, spend more time with the family and just be - just not be any location dependent as well.

**Interviewer:**

**Okay. So you mentioned the passion side of things. How do you connect into that passion?**

**Manish:**

*In the beginning I was like everybody else. I've come from a background where my parents always told me study hard, work hard towards a good job, get money employing - and until I was about maybe 30, 32, I was just following whatever I was told to me from my friends, from my family.*

*But there was a time in my life - about three years ago when I said, it's not meaning much to me. I'm doing - raising a good family, but I can cover my expenses, but it's not meaning anything to me. It's not fulfilling me in any way.*

*So that sort of led me to a self-introspection and I had to work hard on myself. I had to write notes every day to see what really comes out from me - what I'm really keen to do. And just going to a job wasn't cutting it for me so I thought okay let's try and see any other things that might be interesting that is way more interesting to me.*

*Then through my studies and introspection, I also found, not only my interest in entrepreneurship plus also the rule - the tools and the other technologies and the information that is available out there these days which can actually help you to get - to follow your passions.*

**Interviewer:**

**So what actually is it that you're looking to achieve?**

**Manish:**

*The biggest thing I think I will get out of getting into entrepreneurship would be to - if I'm actually prove that I am a success, people who want to judge success by monetary value, as well as if I have social impact. So if I can have maybe a social impact or even*

*if I can get monetary value, I can serve as an example or an inspiration to others, saying this was my story.*

*I wasn't in a good place. I'd lost my job but I struggled and work hard and because I was passionate about what I was doing I was able to turn it around and not only make money of course, for myself, but also was able to serve others.*

*So that's kind of actually fulfils me and also gives me the passion and energy every day to keep doing what I'm doing. Even though there's tough times in any entrepreneurs journey. So that gives you a real good push and the motivation to keep going every day and go through the struggles and the hard work that we have to bring.*

**Interviewer:**

**Sure. So what are you actually doing?**

**Manish:**

*At the moment I've launched an e-commerce business, I sell fitness equipment online. The reason I was talking about technology was that I just launched the e-commerce website. I don't need to open up a physical shop. I don't need to have a big warehouse or anything like that. I can do this business sitting at home or anywhere in the world. Just need to have a laptop and a computer. I arranged my business to be a lifestyle friendly business.*

*So all my business is conducted through my website and I just need to deal with the suppliers and be a connection between these suppliers and the consumers and there's fulfilment and the distribution side of things which is also outsourced so I don't directly get involved in that.*

So that's one - it's very powerful. I think maybe ten or twenty years ago you could not even think of something like that. But these days, with all the things that are available, the technology and everything else that is available, you can actually do all these things - which is phenomenal.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned before about losing the corporate job and everything else. Was that a specific catalyst for you to start on the entrepreneur journey, or was there something else as well?

**Manish:** There was a small part of me who wanted to be an entrepreneur before but I think it probably did act as a catalyst I would say because we didn't get - I didn't get out of the job straight away. There was a time of almost two years so that gave me extra time to prepare myself, to learn and to see what I was passionate about and what industries I want to go in and all those things. So you can say it was a catalyst as well to go through, to be going on my entrepreneurs' journey.

Then I talked to - in the last two or three years, the way the economy is going is every friend you talk to will always either tell you their story or their friends' story who has either been made redundant or they fear their jobs going to go. So that also pushed me to work towards this.

The other thing was - yeah - everyone sort of knows they are in not a very secure position, but not many people are doing anything about it. So I sort of wanted to be proactive and take things head on. I say to people I'm lucky there - I'm actually 34 at the

moment. The more you get older, you don't have those kind of skills. I don't want to say those kind of skills, but once you've done a job for maybe - you're close to 50 or retirement it does take a long time and the opportunities are very limited. So I wanted to develop some skill or something on my own that would keep me secure for the longer future as well.

**Interviewer:** Previously Manish, you said you wanted to be an inspiration to others. Is there any people, or one person or whatever, who truly inspires you? And if so, what is it about that person that inspires you?

**Manish:** There's a few mentors I like. The first of the few were Les Brown and Tim Ferris. I don't know if people have read the book the 4 Hour Work Week. That really has given me an inspiration that - okay, even though I am just an individual, I don't have a lot of capital to invest in a business. But the world is shifting towards a leaner business model and that book had - not only had the business ideas, but also the lifestyle ideas that you can implement that are very practical.

I actually could implement them myself and during my course or during the last two or three years. The things like you can actually ask your employers to work from home and then work very diligently to finish whatever task they ask you to do. Then spare some time later in the day or in the evening for you to start your own business while you're actually in the job. So those kind of things are actually available these days and that's what I learned a lot from them.

**Interviewer:** Is there anybody else?

**Manish:**

As I said, I've got a few mentors so as part of my daily routine, early in the morning I listen to a lot inspirational stuff, a lot of business books so that - I don't know how many people have heard of Brendan Richard. He's one of the top speakers at the moment in the world. He's risen to great heights. He's I think the biggest motivation that I have and the biggest inspiration at the moment.

So I signed up for his programs. I read his books. He has really, really helped me to not only look after my psychology because I was a very negative person but I'm trying to improve myself - my thoughts and my actions are changing every day. So that's really helped me.

Among others and the many more as I said, I like to read books from Robert Kiyosaki - Rich Dad Poor Dad series. I've read books on internet marketing. There's two books I've read from Harry Marshall which was Google AdWords which was actually how to promote your business by Google. Plus there was another book that Harry Marshall wrote that was 80/20 of sins in marketing. That's what I've read in the recent past. Plus one more from Dan Kennedy - he wrote the beginners guide to direct marketing.

Plus many more - I listen to podcasts, I listen to YouTube. Many speakers are people who actually help me if I'm stuck in any particular areas either in my business or my life. That really helps me a lot.

**Interviewer:**

**Okay. So you've got a routine there that you started to speak about which is of the learning side of things. Do you have any other routines to do**

**with health or meditation or those sorts of things that are part of this overall working on yourself?**

**Manish:**

Yes. Definitely. As I said Brendan Richard - I took one of his courses which is called the High Performance Academy. I used to do an exercise routine before, but now it, my day to day work is more structured.

*So early in the morning I will get up and I will do my exercises which gives you a real push and momentum for the rest of the day. So you're able to work much more diligently and faster.*

*After I finish my exercising, I drink a healthy shake which I make at home. Then I either read a book or watch an inspirational video for maybe half an hour.*

*Then later in terms of meditation and stuff, or the spiritual side of things. At the end of the day, because you need to unwind because you really do a lot during the day - I do meditation as well which helps me calm my mind, relaxes - heightens my mind and I'm not going into an overdrive thinking about the business or the next day. So that really helps for you to have a good night's sleep.*

*The people who I follow in that area are Deepak Chopra who has done a series with Oprah and they do like a 21 day meditation audio program that they have. So I listen to them. It lasts for about 15-20 minutes. So that's what I do.*

*I listen to Eckhart Tolle a lot. He's also one of the bigger spiritual leaders at the moment in the world. It really helps me quieten my mind and be present in the moment because as entrepreneurs you're always*

*thinking of the next things and the next things. Is there anything wrong that's going to come up or something, or some fear that you have in mind.*

*Eckhart Tolle - his philosophy is just be present in the right current moment. Whatever is here and let the moment - be present in that and just - you have to come out of that. Either the past state or the future state that you might have. So that's really helped me a lot.*

**Interviewer:** **He's not easy to read, but he's profound in what he says.**

**Manish:** Yes. He's pretty hard to get your mind around. I couldn't finish his book. I couldn't make sense of it but I listen to him on YouTube. Maybe that helps me to heighten my understanding.

**Interviewer:** **Whilst we are exploring and talking about the spirituality side of things, do you think or feel that spirituality is an intrinsic part of the entrepreneurial journey?**

**Manish:** I would say so yes, because not only you get satisfaction as well for - if you do good work and the work then fits other people. I think monetary value you've got to take as to a certain stage but if you want to make it big you need to be able to serve others and once you serve others you actually get a fulfilment of - you actually get a fulfilment that your work or your efforts or your business has helped someone. I think that's a really big booster for you to be able to keep moving forward.

*The other thing is - as I said - you just need to have a higher purpose. Rather than just being able to*

*provide for you and your family. If your goals are to provide for the society as a large, I think you can succeed more and you will be working even more harder because you know it's not just you on the line, it's many other people and many other society that you can actually help and cater for.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay, if you had to wrap an entrepreneurship definition around yourself, what would it be?*

**Manish:** *I would definitely say it's a journey towards freedom, not only from money - these days you don't have to be at a certain education to conduct a business. Many businesses are out there - you can just do in any part of the world. Plus entrepreneurship is also freedom from the society or even freedom from your own mental blocks.*

*So once you struggle and you work hard and you get to a certain point where you eventually thought you would be in a few years' time - three years, five years or whatever it takes. It actually gives you financial freedom that you've actually achieved something and you've been able to break through barriers and you've come out the hard way and able to achieve a desire for you and everyone else.*

**Interviewer:** *So do you think that it's the experience that's the most important aspect?*

**Manish:** *I think, yeah, experience is definitely - because if you're not enjoying every day that you're doing, it's going to be really, really hard for you to get to the final result anyway. So you always have a predefined result that you want to get to, but you need to be able to enjoy every day and the experience should be*

*as fulfilling as the end result.*

*Because you can't be just waiting for that one day that you're going to get the result and you going to be happy or fulfilled. So every day you need to be fulfilled. Every day you need to be enjoying whatever you're doing. I think that the journey part is very important as well.*

**Interviewer:**

**Manish I notice you have a young daughter and a wife. How do you balance your needs as an entrepreneur with your needs as a family?**

**Manish:**

*That's a really interesting question. I'm glad that you asked it. That is a real challenge. I heard a lot - as I said I learned through a lot of personal development that you need to be able to have a concept or master the concept of block out times wherein you block out times for just your business and the entrepreneurial side of things and you need to tell your family.*

*With my daughter it's really hard to do that, but I have to block my time - this time can only be business and after that whatever time I've assigned to my family, then I'm with the family and just going to be there and just be with them. Not do anything with the business, no checking the phone or anything.*

*So I may just have specific block times with them as well as for my own personal stuff or my business stuff as well. I think it's really hard and it's really challenging. Especially when you have a young daughter that you can't explain things to. That's how I try and do it. It works most of the time but it can definitely fail many times as well.*

**Interviewer:** I think kids are sometimes the best entrepreneurs of all.

**Manish,** in wrapping up, what would you say to your younger self, or to others who are about to embark on an entrepreneurship journey? What are some of the things you need to be aware of, what are some of the positives, and what are some of the negatives? How would you advise somebody who's thinking about that space?

**Manish:** Sure. No problem. Yeah that's a good question too. I think first of all you need to be very clear on what you really want to do. So I would spend much more time on myself, introspecting myself what I really want to do. Even if I have to write notes on my - what I'm feeling every day, I'll just write.

So after a period of two or three months you probably will tend to know - if you re-read those notes you might get a feeling of the way because I used to struggle with what I need to do. So after you re-read those notes, you sort of get some kind of inclination where your heart wants you to go.

So after that - once you're clear with the goal you need to really study and learn almost every day. For the people who have actually done what you're trying to achieve - that's if you're trying to open an online shop, you need to be able to study the people who already have success in those sort of areas. With that your journey towards what you're trying to set up will be much easier and then you won't make many mistakes. And even take a short span of time rather than having to figure it out and spending three

or four years just to figure out what to actually do in the beginning. So that's the other part. To keep the momentum going - like I said, learning is important. Just find the purpose that is higher than yourself.

I think in abundant cultures like Australia, you still can actually make a living - I know for some people it's hard, but most of us can make a living. But if you really want to go further and higher beyond just a normal business which is inspired you need to have a higher purpose than yourself to be able to serve a section of society that you want to help.

So that way you can actually even work hard and you will actually be able to achieve much bigger things just by being very clear in your approach.

**Interviewer:** **So would you do what you're doing even if you weren't making money out of it?**

**Manish:** Yeah. It's a hard thing, but yes. At the moment I'm really loving what I'm doing. It's - if it gives inspiration to other people and it helps them - if my story helps them to say okay this guy was - and probably at a less of position but now he's been able to build something. Or at least he's been able to help a certain section of society in a big way, I think that would be very fulfilling.

And I don't think money can buy all of those things. I've been in places in my life and had a reasonably good amount of money and it doesn't make me fulfilled. So I think you need to be able to find a purpose that you can find, you can find a section of society or society as a whole to be able to serve them and fulfil them and lead as an example to others that

*normal people can also do extraordinary things. So that would actually be my goal.*

**Interviewer:**

**Great. Manish just one final question and that is that in your opinion is there any things you might think we haven't covered to this point that you think are important for people to understand about entrepreneurship and being on that journey?**

**Manish:**

*Let me think. I think entrepreneurs are a different breed. It's a lot of hard work, lot of disappointments, and a lot of ups and downs. The only thing is I think the schools or the normal media is - media or other avenues that people get information from - they sort of don't try and educate - the next century probably is going to be the entrepreneurs' century.*

*There is going to be much, much more entrepreneurs who are going to come up with their ideas and opinions and make a shift in this world in a big way. Because I believe that the power from bigger corporations is slowly getting down.*

*All the good ideas and concepts that are coming, are coming from normal people, small people who actually live in a normal world. Sometimes they make it big themselves, or sometimes the big corporates take their concept and make it in a big way.*

*So I think people need to understand that there's a big shift happening at the moment. You don't see it in everyday life but if you study in this subject you will find that we definitely in a point in history where I think we're heading towards entrepreneurs being the head of things.*

**Interviewer:** Okay, Manish Azad, thank you very much for your contribution and spending some time having a chat with me today.

**Manish:** Sure no problems. Thanks Anthony. Thanks for having us as well.

## Contact details

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“What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?”

George Eliot - English Novelist



# Phil & Janelle Sherrard



## **Biography**

In 2012, Phil and Janelle Sherrard founded BinSpring. It came as a result of growing frustrations because their rubbish bin lid was left open after rubbish collection, filling with water when it rained. They were also tired of rubbish being strewn when the bin was blown over on windy days.

Janelle's business background and Phil's building expertise put them in good stead with the right mix of skills and experience to bring BinSpring to life. The BinSpring was designed, developed and is now fully patented.

Janelle completed a Bachelor of Business in 1992 and after a stint travelling and working in Europe and Africa, she returned to Perth. Janelle worked for the State Government in policy roles for the Office of the Minister for Transport, Office of the Deputy Premier and for a cross departmental initiative, the Physical Activity Task Force.

Phil immigrated to Australia in 1996 from Cork, Ireland, bringing with him building skills; the same year he met Janelle. They married in 2000. Phil and Janelle joined forces and used their skills to provide a comprehensive bathroom renovation and design service in Perth. Tubs and Tiles Bathroom Renovations was established in 2003 and is now one of the top bathroom renovation companies in Perth.

## **Business**

Phil and Janelle were approached by Bovis Lend Lease to branch into refurbishing of banks and other commercial properties. Phil and Janelle founded Shercon in 2005. Some of the building projects Shercon has been involved with include: -

- ANZ Bank - North Perth, 77 St George's Terrace, West Perth, Maddington branches

- National Australia Bank (NAB) - Armadale, 50 St George's Terrace, Midland, Balcatta, Harvey, Dowerin and Waroona branches
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) – Joondalup, Fremantle, Cannington, Booragoon and Midland branches.

The Shercon projects have further developed Phil and Janelle's skills in tender evaluation and costings, project management, quality control, subcontractor employment, stock procurement, Occupational Health and Safety (including training and risk management). As a result of further study and solid experience, Phil gained his Western Australian Builders' license in 2011.

Both Janelle and Phil Sherrard currently manage every aspect of their two companies. An innovative, systematic, driven and logical pairing, the team have proven their management skills and abilities through the success of their businesses Tubs and Tiles (bathroom renovations) and Shercon (commercial refurbishment).

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

### **1. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

While we have been working for ourselves in the building industry in WA for the past 18 years, we feel our “real” entrepreneurial journey started with invention of BinSpring.

BinSpring has been a labour of love of ours for the past 3 years. We had a true passion and unrelenting belief that BinSpring was a product that could make a real difference to keep our environment clean. It was a low cost and simple solution that would keep a lid on all wheelie bins reducing stray litter. Simple! But in reality getting a new product to market is far from it.

Our journey so far has been very slow and frustrating at times but a real personal growth experience.

**2. What is the ‘BIG difference’ you are looking to make?**

We are looking to make BinSpring mandatory on all wheelie bins in New Zealand. In Australia we would like BinSpring to be available on LGAs national procurement and in other countries with kerbside collection and wheelie bins, we would like BinSpring to be recognized as the ultimate solution to keep wheelie bin lids closed.

Our greater purpose is inspiring innovative solutions. We will continue to invent products that are practical solutions to everyday problems.

The big difference we would like to make is to support people with high need to get their life back on track and make positive change in the community.

**3. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

In terms of brand and product awareness to the general communities, largely social media and networking with industry and business.

Ultimately we would like to use BinSpring as a way to support our greater purpose of supporting people in high need to get their life back on track.

**4. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

Both of us:-

- Believe in learning from experience
- Are connected to our personal and business core values
- Will never give up - if at first you don't succeed, try and try again
- Are extremely motivated and driven to succeed
- Come back to our core purpose and values for motivation.

**5. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?**

This is a really interesting question. I don't think any entrepreneur can honestly say they undertake their entrepreneurial journey based purely on the basis of making a difference. In most instance money is a driver. But I do believe that the entrepreneurial journey does change your perspective, identify and mould your personal belief systems and make you really think about how you can affect positive change.

We believe that if we had our time again, I would accept that the journey is a long one and would take the time to slow down and enjoy the ride and accept that all good things take time.

- 6. *Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?***

Janelle - I am a spiritual person and BinSpring is one of the most important aspects on my life, it can therefore be nothing else but a spiritual journey. My personal growth & strength reflects very much through BinSpring.

Interestingly BinSpring in New Zealand is becoming the energetic connector of government, industry, research groups and the general community to bring change to the way the issue of litter and protecting the environment. We couldn't ask for anything better.

- 7. *Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?***

Not at this point - but perhaps our conversation will evolve in to further discussion.

## **Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Hi today I'm talking with Phil and Janelle Sherrard from Perth in Western Australia - welcome first of all to you both and thank you for contributing. Rather than me telling your story, maybe I can throw it over to you to give our listeners a better understanding of what your entrepreneurial journey has been like and what it's been about.

**Phil:** Yeah well, thanks for the opportunity. Well for us it's our first venture I suppose with BinSpring and really came about probably because as a child, my father always made me think about something that was needed or something handy in the world that could change things. So all my life I've always been thinking and looking at different aspects and ideas as to how I could come out and make a product or invent a product from new.

And it was just out of - probably out of necessity more than anything that we came across BinSpring and our journey sort of started from there. Where it was one day - a couple of mornings on bin collection day where our rubbish ended up all across the street on a windy day and it was raining and wet and I thought to myself this is ridiculous.

I said surely to god we can find a way of keeping the lid on our bin and I came up with a very simple idea of spring on the lid of the bin.

The journey started from there basically with a lot of help from designers and people like that and we had prototypes and bits and pieces and for really - Janelle

took over from there. I came up with the initial idea and then Janelle sort of took it on from there.

**Interviewer:**

**So Janelle what was your contribution?**

**Janelle:**

So I guess Phil and I prior to BinSpring had been working together in the building industry for 18 odd years before that. We sort of work very well together in terms of Phil being the man who uses his hands to get the job done and I provide more of the assistance to do it and more the management side of things.

So I guess we use that to drive BinSpring and I guess from that perspective we're a really good pairing. So I've taken the concept that Phil developed and I've been working with designers to get the product into market and to ensure that we've got all the other issues well and truly covered in terms of legal aspect, marketing, cash flow, etc.

**Interviewer:**

**It's an interesting combination when you get partners working together that often-times one person is on the tools and the other is running the business behind the scenes. It's very common.**

**Within the entrepreneurial side of it though, rather than the actual business side, was there any sort of catalysts that got either or you or both of you on to that entrepreneurial journey of doing things yourself rather than following the traditional norms of going to school, learning something and going off and working for the man?**

**Janelle:**

I guess if I can speak for Phil a bit on this one, we were - Phil had been working for another company in the construction industry before we ended up going

out on our own. We had just always thought we could do it better. You know, okay there's company's out there that are doing an okay job, but we can do it better. We've both got a very similar attitude that - and we're both very driven and we both feel as though we can add that maybe 20-30% to what other people are doing and give people 100%. So for us it's - I guess customer service is really critical.

**Phil:**

Yeah very important I think. Really every day - pretty much every day there's something where - somewhere you go, a shop or a place or an industry that you just look at and you think that they seem to be very comfortable in what they do but they don't really push to drive or give that extra mile. They just sort of sit back and I think for an entrepreneur or - you just need to have that extra - to put in that extra mile and go that extra yard which costs nothing but the return is absolutely enormous.

**Interviewer:**

**So guys from an entrepreneurial perspective, rather than just the business because the business I sort of get, but from the entrepreneurial side, what are you looking to achieve?**

**Janelle:**

BinSpring for us is a vehicle for us to ultimately give back to the community. We feel as though we can help make a difference in an area that is really quite challenging to be honest.

We feel as though the world has come a little bit unstuck in terms of people's reliance on drugs and alcohol to get by. We'd like to support a program that's out of Geraldton that is a long time drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre that enables people to

give back to their local community and develop life skills to help them reintegrate back into society. So when our company is profitable we will be using that as our vehicle to raise the profile of this initiative.

**Interviewer:**

**Anything you'd like to add Phil?**

**Phil:**

Well, possibly just - I think from being a tradie and the years of working I've always looked at people who are less fortunate than myself and who aren't able to find work. I know there's plenty of people out there who are well capable but just struggle to get started in life or get started - so I've always wanted to be able to be in a position to help people like that and start them off with a trade or get them into some sort of a course or something like that.

When we're looking at BinSpring and everything else that is something we want to do - help other people out and try and give them a bit of a hand up in life. A little bit of help.

**Interviewer:**

Okay that's great. One of the things you both know from the pre interview information we exchanged is that I'm looking to explore spirituality in entrepreneurship. Some of the stuff you've been talking about - that sense of service, that giving back to the community, helping people up and having some value and everything else is very reminiscent of what people talk about as spirituality - not necessarily referring to religion as spirituality, do you see a strong connection between spirituality and entrepreneurship? And if so, what are your beliefs and how does this figure in your thinking?

**Janelle:**

Yeah I think that - I think that from the onset of our BinSpring journey, one thing that has - it's helped us both do is connect with our core values. I guess in a way when you talk about core values, you talk about spirituality because I think once you - you start on an endeavour like an entrepreneurial journey, you do have to connect with yourself and the business becomes very much part of you and your journey. I think that - I do think that your entrepreneurial journey is very closely linked to spirituality.

**Phil:**

And so really I mean it's the spiritual side of helping - us helping others as well as that sort of goodwill feeling for me, it's probably more to do with that. I think you get more joy in life helping others than you do making money I suppose and that's the exciting part for us and that's what we're looking forward to - is that joy that we will get from being able to connect with other people and help others too. I think that's way more important than anything else.

**Interviewer:**

**Okay thanks. In terms of your journey, have you found people who inspire you and if so, who might they be and what is it about them that actually inspires you?**

**Phil:**

That's a - Janelle can carry on with this one, but I think for us to start with it was very difficult. I think to start - you don't give up - but when you're starting off, you don't know anyone, you don't have the contacts. You take one step forward and two steps backwards sometimes and you do meet the wrong people. It's very hard. But slowly over time we've very luckily - we've managed to sort of thread through a lot of people and find a really good team of

people who are very helpful and who do inspire us but it hasn't been straightforward and easy. It didn't happen straight away. We've certainly had a few hiccups along the way. I'm sure Janelle would like to expand on that one.

**Janelle:**

In terms of people who inspire me, I connect regularly with other start-up companies and people in the entrepreneurial space and I think I just - I get inspired by other people that are really - you know, that are disciplined and dedicated and have 100% belief that what they set out to do is going to make it.

I have been fortunate enough to connect with a lady in New Zealand who is basically representing BinSpring there. She definitely inspires me because she is - her nickname is - she's a bull terrier. No she's just unrelenting and she's motivated - and she's got a few health issues but she just remains positive.

So I guess people that have - people that have motivation but they may have hit a stumbling block, but they dust themselves off, they get up and they go again. They learn from the experience and they go again. That's very much in my opinion the sign - a common trait of an entrepreneur and something that I really admire.

**Interviewer:**

I heard somebody describe it as being willing to fail more often.

**Janelle:**

Yes exactly

**Interviewer:**

I find a lot of people have some sort of ongoing success ritual or success routine that is part of the

**way they approach their day and their life. Is that something you guys have as well?**

**Janelle:**

I do. I get up every morning and I've got The Secret App on my phone so the first thing I do is open that up, read the phrase or the saying of the day, then I exercise and then I do my yoga and I just find that keeps me A) grounded, B) grateful and C) focussed. So that's a very, very important and integral part of my daily ritual or routine?

**Interviewer:**

**Fabulous. Phil? Do you do something similar or something - or whatever your stuff is?**

**Phil:**

We're lucky enough that we live not too far from the beach and we have a little dog, so for me it's - certainly in this kind of weather now, it's fantastic to get down the beach at sort of 5, 6 o'clock in the morning and go for a good hours walk. It just gives you time to reflect and think about the day. I suppose for me that's quite a spiritual thing in itself just to be able to walk and have that sort of free time on your own to just think about what's on for the day or - yeah, so that's my bit of enjoyment.

**Interviewer:**

**Fabulous. If you guys had to describe yourselves as an entrepreneur and put it down in words, what description would you give yourselves and why?**

**Janelle:**

Motivated, honest, caring, determined, committed.

**Phil:**

Yeah I think so. I think you have to be honest and when you're honest, I think you meet other honest people as well and determination. You can never give up. You've got to believe - if you're going to be an entrepreneur you 100% have to believe in what you're doing and you have to be enjoying yourself. There's

*not always - it can be hard at times - probably more financially at times when you're trying to get a new product off the ground but you have to be enjoying what you're doing but if you're enjoying it and 100% believe in it, I think you're half way there.*

**Interviewer:**

**So last question in terms of the formal questions. What - if you were to look back from where you are now and you're going to give some advice to your younger selves or to somebody who is thinking of going on the entrepreneurial journey, what would that advice be?**

**Janelle:**

*I guess from my perspective I never thought that it would be - would take so long to get the product to where it is today which is - it's only very recently been commercialised. So I would say take the time to enjoy the journey, the entrepreneurial journey. Remember everything. There's going to be highs, there's going to be lows but enjoy the ride.*

**Phil:**

*And follow - you have to follow through with it. If you really believe in something, you have to follow through with it and stick with it. There's lots of people who, when you're meeting people and you're talking about what you're doing or your product, there's so many people who will possibly knock you and think that it's a waste of time - and there's plenty of others who think it's fantastic.*

*If you believe in it yourself, you've got to follow it through and you will - there are sometimes there's doubt and everything else but if you really strongly believe in it, you've got to stick with it and try to find*

*the right team around you and go for it. But it does take a long time.*

**Janelle:** Just on that note with people - there's one thing that I would say that I probably learnt two years into the journey was that - make sure that you really clearly identify with your core values.

*And then when you are connecting with other key partners, to try and make sure that - or to make sure that those people have the same values as you. Because the people that surround you are what will allow you to be - to achieve what you ultimately want to achieve and to achieve the - I guess, get the best results in the process.*

**Interviewer:** Yes. I would certainly agree with that. Certainly in my business life, I've done both. I've been with people who don't share the values, and typically it's turned out badly and when I've worked with people who do share the values, we can move mountains. It's quite extraordinary.

**Janelle:** Absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Phil and Janelle, thank you very much for participating in the interview and this project. I really wish you all the best for the coming year.

**Phil:** It's been a pleasure. Thank you.

**Janelle:** Thank you very much Anthony.

## **Contact details**

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**“Singleness of purpose is one of the chief essentials for success in life, no matter what may be one’s aim”**

John D. Rockefeller



# Ryan Ebert

2016 top 30 under 30 entrepreneur in Australia

## **Biography**

Ryan is a Melbourne based Company Director, Physiotherapist and Entrepreneur. Following graduating as a Physiotherapist with first class honours from Curtin University, Ryan began working in the physiotherapy practice setting before pursuing his other passion of business, completing further studies in both Business and Management.

After sometime working in the occupational rehabilitation setting, Ryan successfully launching his first business venture and through other business ventures Ryan was appointed as the youngest director to the board of a large hospitality and entertainment venue and financial services company.

Very passionate about the Health field, Ryan is the CEO & co-founder of PHW (Productive Healthy Workplaces) Group Pty Ltd. A national Occupational Physiotherapy, Injury prevention and Office design company that partner with its clients to create healthier and more productive workplaces.

Still active in the Physiotherapy space, Ryan sits on the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) Occupational Health and Graduate committees. He is an advocate for the Physiotherapy profession in particular in up skilling the business skills of Physiotherapists having taught and worked on a number of projects in this area.

Ryan also writes about the changing face of business in today's world and the building of new businesses as a GenY entrepreneur and millennial leader.

**Business - PHW Group - 'Occupational Physiotherapy, Workplace Training & Office Design'.** PHW Group Pty Ltd are a national Injury Prevention consulting firm based in Melbourne, Australia.

We specialise in promoting Productive, Healthy workplaces and helping organisations to transform the way they do business.

Our emphasis is strong financial return for our partners who invest in utilising our services. The link between health and productivity is well established and forms the foundation of all we do.

Founded in 2014, PHW Group builds on many years' experience in the field of health and wellbeing for workplaces.

We provide services and products for workplaces on scales both large and small. Our skilled and experienced providers are located across Australia and New Zealand, and have expertise in many areas, primarily in physiotherapy, training, organizational psychology, health and safety consulting, and group facilitation.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

**1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I responded to the call-out as I really enjoyed the title of entrepreneurial heart but also because I spent a lot of time reading books around entrepreneurship so was interested to get involved in one. In regards to what I want from the interview and experience is really to be part of a book writing process as it will be something I do in the future but mostly just to give back to the community. I've been lucky in having so many people give back to me in some way that I've learnt from them to always give back wherever you can.

**2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

Expanding on what we discussed in the actual interview I would describe it as an absolute rollercoaster. The journey has had many highs and lows luckily more highs than lows but it's always-taking twists and turns.

It has been a journey of exponential learning, a lot of hard work and just absorbing as much as possible along the way. The entrepreneurial journey is definitely one of risk but has to be

calculated risk and for me it has always been about pushing the limits and how far can I take this vision of mine.

**3. *What is the ‘BIG difference’ you are looking to make?***

Again elaborating on the interview, I would love to change the whole way we look at commercial property and office design. To be able to build offices for people to work in that not only improve their health through movement, space and cultural interaction but also increase productivity I think could re-shape the entire way white collar professionals work.

**4. *How do you intend to get your message out to the world?***

That's a good question, for over a year it has been many different forums, online, media, through our work and clients etc., but now the focus has really narrowed to target one big project and make a massive impact with this. If this message is going to be successful it has to be proven and not only that but proven by a successful and substantial company so it is now a simple 2 fold strategy;

1. Build the company to a substantial size and become a market leader.
2. Build a case study office and run essentially an experiment proving our theories or disproving then adjust from the learning's and continue until we show a big impact. When we do this with a company that has the size, capacity and resources to shout about the message I'm confident we will get the message out there.

**5. *What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?***

I think I've always been driven, I love to compete in any way I can through sport when I was younger and now through business. For me it is about success and winning but not for the reasons of material purposes i.e. money, cars etc.

For me it's a drive to “play” essentially I see business as a sporting

field and being an entrepreneur as a sports player on that field. I need to compete to make change happen, to drive me to be the best I can but also to make an impact and leave something of substance or change to the world while I can which I think fuels the drive.

**6. *If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?***

I don't think so. For the first year of building the company I made no money, invested everything back into the passion and worked full time, while building my company vision, passion, drive, focus whichever you would like as if it was a 2<sup>nd</sup> full time job. I would continue to do that to this day I think, the nice thing now about making money from it is that I can focus on only that and not needing another job to cover my needs.

That said I live pretty basic and its impact and freedom that are important to me not the big payoff some business people chase. When I did begin being paid, it was definitely less than my high paying corporate jobs so again don't think the money would really change much for me.

**7. *Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?***

I think I've always had somewhat a sense of spirituality/higher sense of self, purpose, and connection to something bigger and without doubt it is part of my entrepreneurial direction and journey. It's hard to articulate in written format but it definitely has something to do with health and building of great things. I think that lead to a lot of confusion when I was younger as I started an engineering (building) degree followed by completing a Physiotherapy (health) degree whilst travelling a fair bit in not so well off countries finding a greater purpose then just money and power before winding up in business.

In terms of “this element looks and feels like” for me it feels really like an adventure and walking a path that is at times isolating but fuelled by pavement to build something bigger than myself. It is energized by people and impacting people in a positive way. It is actually surrounded by many artificial elements (think inner city Melbourne/other capital cities) rather than raw earthy elements but there is a sense of tranquillity within these “non-real” elements to it if that makes sense?

Sorry as I said it’s hard to articulate in word but there is definitely a connection for me with the direction I go.

**8. *Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?***

I’m excited to see the final product and read the book and think it is great to see something that connects business and spirituality.

I think through business you can really leave an imprint on the world of who you actually are through what you create and the work your business does.

The only other thing I would say is to challenge everything, conventional thoughts, stereotypes, the constant noise of the world we live in etc. Without challenging these things there is no way I would be where I am today. I’m a CEO at 25 with everyone in my company older than me, have not come from a privileged background (though certainly didn’t come from the streets) but think if you challenge the norm with a real passion, purpose and vision nothing else matters including what people think can’t be done.

## Interview Transcript

**Interviewer:** Okay today my guest is Ryan Ebert, a young entrepreneur who is doing some amazing things in my opinion. But I'm not going to tell you about Ryan's story. Ryan welcome and thank you for your time and participating in this project. Can you give us and the listeners an idea of what your entrepreneurial journey has been so far?

**Ryan:** Yeah thanks Anthony. I guess my journey is probably not all that long in terms of the entrepreneurial side of things. But in terms of business and finance and marketing and anything like that, I've been studying it since I was about 10 years old.

About two or three years ago, I started to learn what being an entrepreneur was. Up until that point I had no idea. I'd gone to uni and done a physio degree and started working full time. When I worked full time I realised that I actually didn't like working full time, especially for somebody else.

So I started exploring a couple of business ventures, obviously in the health space initially and they didn't really work out, but I certainly learnt a lot from them. Then since then, it's sort of been a bit of a roller coaster. I did one business venture in marketing and finance that did a little bit okay and got me on the board of a multi-million dollar hospitality venue here in Melbourne which I've sort of used in the last two years as a real life MBA I guess.

Then about two years ago I met my business partner and we started PHW Group - Productive Healthy

*Workplaces. It's an occupational physio company which we've essentially grown in two years to be national. We've got about 50 people all over Australia that work for us currently with some major partners. We work with businesses, anything from small business through to ASX Top 200 listed companies in the area of injury prevention and actually designing offices that stop sedentary work with sitting being the new smoking.*

*We've just grown rapidly in the last two years and I sort of feel like I haven't slept but we've gotten it to a point now that it's all been restructured. Just recently I've taken over the role as CEO for that company. So that's sort of a snapshot where I'm at.*

**Interviewer:**

**Fabulous. With your entrepreneurial ideas, is that something you've learned or just aspire to? Is that something that's been intrinsically within you or has there been some sort of trauma or something like that which has been a catalyst for embarking on this journey of self-expression?**

**Ryan:**

*Yeah I guess probably two fold effect. It's definitely been - and the biggest thing that I guess, especially in the last three years in the whole journey that I've been doing, is - and what I talk about with some talks and some lectures that I've done at uni in entrepreneurship and young leadership - is actually just learning by doing.*

*So doing something - in my case I generally don't do it very well the first time and then do it again. So I've learnt a lot through that.*

*But really sort of soul searching around it, I guess it stemmed also from possibly my growing up and the way that we did grow up - I was in - my family's quite young. We moved around Australia a lot because my dad was in the air force and that was really cool because we got to see lots of Australia but there wasn't a lot of freedom. Certainly in the military there's not generally a lot of creative expression that you can do.*

*So growing up in that environment, I guess I actually started my career when I first left school and I was going into that environment and realised that it just wasn't for me. So I just kind of ended up going the full 180 and becoming an entrepreneur.*

**Interviewer:**

**So what ultimately is it you're looking to achieve?**

**Ryan:**

*Personally? Or Through business - because I guess it's...?*

**Interviewer:**

**Both - I say both because realistically with this project what we're looking to do is understand the person more so than the business but the business I find is often an expression of the person anyway.**

**Ryan:**

*Yeah. I mean they're two different things, but I'd say that without a doubt they're very intrinsically linked and they're sort of a reflection of each other.*

*Personally for me it's all about essentially freedom. Entrepreneurship - now I do say freedom lightly because I do probably end up working a 60+ hour week.*

*But it's about the choice of doing what work I want*

*to do, what I feel that has purpose, what sort of relates to my values, what I want to see in the world, what I'm frustrated with. What I want to change. Having just the freedom and the resources to actually impact that change which then sort of leads in the business.*

*What I'd really like to see is being from a physiotherapy background, and being from a health background and growing our company - what we're really trying to do and the vision of that business is to change the way people work. Especially in the corporate office space.*

*I think it's very 1980s - you've got people just sitting all the time and the mammoth of health issues that just stems from that. You're talking increased obesity, lung problems, heart problems and diabetes - not to mention muscular skeletal injuries which we physios deal with all the time.*

*Something that we're really doing from a business end is looking at treating that - looking at also preventing that. Prevention being better than a cure and we've started to move into this space - so another big passion of mine is property and renovating and that kind of thing - and using space and property and design and all of that sort of stuff. Then furniture and we've combined with some psychologists and interior designers.*

*Really learning about how we can actually design our office to not just improve people's health but increase their productivity which obviously results in increased bottom line.*

So it's a pretty big vision when you look at it holistically but over the next 20, 30 years it would be really cool if the way that offices are actually built and the way that people work and interact with each other if that completely changes to be a much more health focused way that enhances productivity. That's sort of what we're hoping to do. But it's obviously going to take time.

**Interviewer:** Interesting viewpoint. A couple of words you used that I picked up on was vision and holistically. As you know from the pre interview information we exchanged, what this project is about is understanding how entrepreneurs think and particularly looking at the connections between spirituality and entrepreneurship.

**Those two words - vision and holistically are often connected into the spiritual realms, whatever they may be. Do you have a view about the connectedness between spirituality and entrepreneurship and if you do, what is it and how would you describe it?**

**Ryan:** Yeah I think one of the best things that I've ever heard is if - being an entrepreneur you can essentially be unapologetically you. So you don't actually have to conform to anything. Now whether that means you have a successful business or not is a whole other story. Because obviously if you're unapologetically you and the marketplace doesn't like it, then you might have some problems.

The core essence is that you can be unapologetically you and develop what change you're wanting to see

*in the world through that vision. Which is exactly what you picked up on. I think that connects into the spirituality of who you are and what you're actually wanting to achieve.*

**Interviewer:**

**Do you have any specific spiritual practices? Or success routines or rituals that you utilise to actually keep you motivated and on track with what you're looking to achieve?**

**Ryan:**

*Yeah definitely. I'd love to say that I meditate more regularly but unfortunately it kind of comes and goes but I definitely do it and I think that it's extremely powerful.*

*For me though, I think it's about finding the thing that works for you - and for me its running. I try and run two to three times a week at least and just put some music on and it just clears - really clears my head. And that's sort of what I consider as my me time and if I don't do that, then I notice that a lot of things suffer including my business.*

*The other thing is recently having a national company, I travel frequently and I refuse to do any work on aeroplanes. So whenever we fly - and I really hope they never actually put Wi-Fi on aeroplanes because it's one of the best times. You are up in the sky, nobody can contact you. Even if I'm watching a TV show or something but half the time, you're just sitting there and you just get to think and reflect and just have absolute sort of silence while you're flying.*

*So those three things are pretty big and come straight to mind with that question.*

**Interviewer:** If you had to define yourself as an entrepreneur, what sort of words would you use and why would you use those specific words?

**Ryan:** Oh that's a good question. I don't think I've actually ever really thought about that because I don't like thinking, defining myself as per se. I think definitely words that have certainly been told and words that I would resonate with would be quite determined, quite driven. But I guess people focused is very much - I'm in health, there's a reason I did a physio degree.

I remember going back because so many people were turning around and saying why didn't you do a business degree? I did a physio degree because I want to focus on people and I want to focus on change. And also, definitely the word - I mean I still think the definitions coming out - but the word millennial in terms of context of leadership - is one that I would say I resonate well with.

We don't - with our company - we don't really have a very hierarchical structure. Many of the people that actually work for me are older and more experienced and far better technically at the job than I am and possibly ever will be.

So definitely - I guess going back to that word holistic - and we just really look at things as a one unit and as a team in terms of way of dealing with people and making decisions and leadership.

That essentially reflects into my entrepreneurship because for me that's sort of what I see the role is - being the leader that innovates that changes, that

*actually motivates and unites people under a sort of common cause to move in one direction I guess.*

**Interviewer:** **That's a very interesting statement. How do you actually go about finding the people who actually share your vision as distinct from employees?**

**Ryan:** We don't recruit.

**Interviewer:** **Right?**

**Ryan:** *I say that loosely - so when I say that we don't recruit - we do recruit for certain roles but the key people that we've really brought on board and looking how we've grown our network and the people that have come on board with us and that. We look after them very well and they have great autonomy and they're well looked after in terms of other ways.*

*But the big thing is we actually - most of these people we'll connect with before even thinking about bringing them on board.*

*So another thing that I spend a lot of my time is with the Australian Physio Association. I sit on the board with their occupational health there doing business projects for them and other bits and pieces. Through that we really learn a lot of people in the industry.*

*My business partner actually runs the Level 1 course in terms of skilling people into the field of physiotherapy we work in. And we're very exclusive in that field in that we only focus on - at the moment. So generally through running the training and that, we're exposed to a lot of people in our space.*

*From there we just - it would happen the same with*

*you - you're networking and just with the people you meet - some you really resonate with, some you don't. Then essentially we just initiate conversations where we're at over coffees or lunch or something to just really learn about these people. And they learn about us and they learn about what we do.*

*That's sort of how we marry up that fit. If we go, well this is looking pretty good and we've identified them, at that point will we actually put them through a recruitment process to come on board with us. So it's really about aligning with the right people I guess.*

**Interviewer:**

**Sounds a bit like business dating doesn't it?**

**Ryan:**

*It's a little bit like business dating, you've got to get the right partner. I've had in a previous business venture which before I took on the full time CEO role of this company, we ended up selling it and we did alright with it.*

*But I learnt a lot about picking the wrong staff and probably incentivising them in the wrong way and not uniting them under a vision. Also I learnt from good HR friends of mine and whenever we do really interview - even for positions in like our admin team, there's really no formal questions.*

*There's about - when it gets to the point where I'm having a chat with them - there's about sort of five things I have in my head that I want to tick. But it's virtually we go out for a coffee and you just let conversation flow and those five things will get ticked or they won't get ticked.*

*But it will come from them being natural rather than*

trying to create this artificial environment of sitting across a table from each other, very formal - all that kind of stuff. Which for some businesses it works amazing. For ours, we've found that the latter actually works better for us.

**Interviewer:**

I would suggest that for a lot of businesses, and people who may be looking to establish a business, the way that you're doing it is probably the better way. Because (if I'm understanding you correctly), what you're saying is that you're getting to know the people who you think could be appropriate to helping your organisation grow.

You meet with them as I jokingly said about the business dating - but from that particular process you get to know and understand whether it feels right. If it feels right then you move forward and if it doesn't feel right, it was just a pleasant conversation.

**Ryan:**

Well it does and I - I went into this and I still don't know much and I've got mentors and teachers and I learn something every day in this sort of journey and running a company and everything like that.

The one thing that I've also learnt - sort of being 25 and running a national company - is that you can - for somebody who's willing, you can teach anybody anything. Or you can kind of learn anything if you're willing to put in the work to learn it.

For us it's really about well we want to work with the people that we want to work with. We want them to want to work with us. We want them to want to work with the other people in the organisation.

*Anything else we can really teach. Any technical side we can teach but what we can't teach is a cultural fit.*

*What we can't teach is somebody who's just like, I'm really passionate about the vision that we're trying to achieve so they're putting their best in every day. So I figure if we get that one, then anything else we can teach and train and get past that barrier pretty easy.*

**Interviewer:**

**Yeah - makes a lot of sense. Ryan is there any particular people who inspire you? And if so who might they be and what is it about them that inspires you?**

**Ryan:**

*Yeah. I mean. There's plenty of people that inspire me. First and foremost would definitely be my mum. She's just outstanding in terms of her work ethic, the way - what she sort of holds true and important and how that drives decisions. I've definitely learnt a lot from that.*

*Then all the way through - I'm a big fan of Richard Branson. I think he's really good. I'm actually in my home office at the moment and I've just looked right to my library because that sums up who inspires me. Warren Buffet, Scott Pape - the Barefoot Investor. I've been fortunate enough to meet him a few times. He's one of my inspirations and a bit of a hero.*

*And then anything down from all the way - just to people that I'm fortunate enough to meet with. My mentors - they definitely inspire me, but just even people that I meet with that are either starting off or just other entrepreneurs. Once you get in this space, you end up getting a network and just meeting all these people that are doing cool stuff or really trying*

*to do cool stuff and they're overcoming crazy odds and they just keep going. You have a conversation with them and draw inspiration from that.*

**Interviewer:** *Are there any other sort of common attributes of those people that you'd say yep, those are certain elements of what they do or how I see them that are key elements that inspire me?*

**Ryan:** *Yeah. Big time. Also, actually I probably missed sporting people. I love my sports so they very much inspire me, especially their focus and dedication that they can put.*

*But the biggest attribute that I would say is definitely just work ethic and hard work without a doubt. But determination, drive, putting up with setback after setback after setback and just continuing to go.*

*And that stems from the people that I see that continue to go and grow and foster and become successful vs perhaps the people that don't because the reality is most businesses don't actually work out - is just an inherent belief in what they are doing will make a difference.*

*They're doing it for something bigger than just money or bigger than a job or bigger than just having a business. They're doing it for something that's really driving a purpose. Otherwise it's sort of existing. I think without a doubt you need that because - and I've had plenty of times with this when you're getting up at 5 o'clock to start work or when you're working through to 2 am.*

*The superficial things don't keep you going at 2am in*

*the morning when you're sleep deprived and you've just faced - I don't know, there's a myriad of things that go wrong with running a business and anyone who's run a business knows what I'm talking about. And you're trying to overcome them and it's just that that nobody really sees but just having that belief and that drive and that sort of work ethic to just keep going makes all the difference I think.*

*One of the things for me in the last 12 months that I really had to sort out is focus as well. Actually refining your focus. Cutting out some noise of stuff that might be - that might look really attractive, or it might be fun to do or that sort of thing but it's not really going to get you a business where it needs to go or aligned a vision, or progress it forward.*

*So a big thing that I've sort of had to work on is actually staying focused and what is my focus and how do I manage that with all the distractions of the world that we live in today.*

**Interviewer:** *Very interesting comments. If you were to have the opportunity, what would you say to your younger self, or maybe it could be somebody who's listening to this interview at some point who is considering the entrepreneurial journey as being their potential way of life?*

*What sort of advice would you give them in terms of what to look out for, what to do or what would be the key things you would want to impart to that person?*

**Ryan:** *A couple of key things that I reckon - and I say this in all honesty not being hugely deep into my*

*entrepreneurial journey, but the biggest things that I've learnt is definitely, the people you surround yourself with are a reflection of you.*

*So who you are surrounding yourself with, who you're learning things from, without a doubt. Find a mentor relationship with people that have either done it before or are on their way of doing it, or are further on their journey than you are and just have a real connection with them and learn as much as you can from them. I think that's been the biggest thing that's definitely helped me.*

*The other thing that I would say - probably to my younger self - is to not listen so much what other people think that I should do. I was fortunate in that I scored well in school and I did this and that kind of thing and everyone got their two cents of advice, but only you really know what you actually want to do.*

*I started off doing an engineering degree, I completed a physio degree. I now pretty much am in full time in business apart from half a day a week where I try and do physio just because I enjoy it.*

*So really - for me I would probably be here a lot quicker if I'd actually just listened to that side rather than people telling me oh well you got this score so you should do that, oh you should live here, you should buy that kind of house. All that kind of thing.*

*It's great that people have an opinion and definitely listen to it and engage with it but listen to yourself above and beyond any of that is what I'd say one of the maybe the mistakes that I've sort of made.*

And just - to be honest, just do it. Because you're going to fail. You're going to screw up badly. Everyone does. But the sooner that you get past that, the sooner that you realise that hey I'm still standing, we're still going. What's next? And you learn so much more from that than you ever will from your market research, your text books, anything like that.

I think the final point that's really important to me and it's probably stemming from not coming from a particularly well off background - sort your money out. I'm a big, big fan of finance and I'm a big fan of financial freedom and having cash reserves.

Our business has no debt. We have a saver account that holds three months of operating costs just as cash - as back up. And the freedom that that allows me as the entrepreneur to do - to go I've got this idea, I really want to do this. We get the directors together. We get the team together and we go do what we reckon. We nut it out and we go and do it is so much more than we could ever have been hampered with debt.

But it's not only the business. It's personal as well. If you're struggling to pay debts. If you're maxed out on credit cards - if you're buying shit that you don't need. Because when you're an entrepreneur, you can't get into it for just money because it doesn't happen at the start.

And if you can't control your own finances, you really got to be thinking about can you control a company's? Because when you control a company's,

*there's people's pay and there's peoples mortgages, there's peoples life that depends on you so I think putting a bit of time and effort to making sure you can manage your own finances, you give yourself a buffer.*

*You give yourself a bit of safety because the reality is business is very risky. This allows you to run a business without sort of being shackled.*

*I also think there's a big ethical thing around that is if you're okay financially in business at times you get tempted to do things that you go - or even just in the running of your business. Do I want to take on that client? It's not really going to be good - it's probably not going to be a good fit. My people really aren't going to like it but you know - if my personal finances are alright, I'll be inclined to go well because we just need the money.*

*So you want to be in a position where you really just focus on your business rather than be shackled by financial stress. But like I said, that probably comes from not having a financial background to fall on if it all goes pear shaped for me anyway.*

**Interviewer:**

***Some very profound words of advice and I wish somebody had given me that advice when I first started on my journey many years ago. I also hope and pray I might have been wise enough to have listened.***

**Ryan:**

*Yeah. And in all honesty, I'm not perfect. I look back and go look I was in an okay position when I made the leap to full time entrepreneur but probably could have stuck it out in that job six months longer to*

*really just concrete that, survived and you look back on that and you take some learnings. But yeah, they would just be a big thing that I would suggest.*

**Interviewer:** **That was Ryan Ebert. Thank you very much for your contribution.**

**Ryan:** Pleasure Anthony. Enjoy.

## **Contact details**

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“All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts.”

James Allen



# Shai Wolter

Soul Ardour

## **Biography**

Shai Wolter is a self-taught sportswear designer and fitness entrepreneur. Shai has always been strongly connected to both the creative & fitness industries from an early age. Female physique competing and weightlifting were a large part of Shai's life for many years.

Living in active-wear 6 out of 7 days per week Shai admits to finding it very difficult to find active-wear that would fit her and last more than 4 washes.

Since studying nursing and graduating high school in 2010, Shai has since completed her personal training qualifications and is now making her mark on the fitness industry in a different way.

## **Business**

Soul-Ardour Sportswear is the brainchild of Shai.

*Soul* meaning spiritual part of the human. *Ardour* meaning passion.

After noticing a gap in the market for high quality, functional sportswear Shai jumped at the opportunity to bring her creations to life.

Shai's design techniques stem back to her study into the human anatomy and bio mechanics of the human body which allow her to deeply understand how the body moves during exercise.

Soul Ardour is ethically handmade here in Australia and created using high quality, eco-friendly, recycled fabrics. All garments are made with limited edition prints and are available from our website. [www.soulardour.com.au](http://www.soulardour.com.au).

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

**1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I responded because I am a young entrepreneur wanting to make a difference in the world we live in. From the interview I want to show other young people you don't need capital to start a business and anything is possible. They sometimes forget our generation is the next generation of business owners, CEO's, educators and politicians.

**2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

Exciting, stressful, scary, awesome, huge lessons, absolutely amazing and I'd never do it differently.

**3. What is the 'BIG difference' you are looking to make?**

I am a sportswear designer, I believe in ethical, ecofriendly fashion and empowering confidence and body-love in women across the globe. In a world dictated by social media and filters women are losing themselves and I want to be the pivot in bringing that back!

**4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

Through developing connections, growing an online community of women I can reach out to, empower and inspire, creating business partnerships.

**5. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

The feeling of satisfaction every time I get a message from a random lady or customer saying I inspire them, and the feedback from customer about how they feel wearing my sportswear. Nothing beats that motivation, except the people who say you can't.

**6. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?**

No, I have endured 12months with no money and only just starting to hit sales and that not even turn a profit, I have the same drive and determination day in and day out to fulfil my business vision and mission. 'Soul-Ardour strive to educate, empower & inspire healthy body image through the design of quality, functional sportswear for true active women.'

**7. Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?**

Most definitely, to explain it is something I just cannot do. Once I started delving into my spiritual side I began to learn things about myself I never knew and I wouldn't go back on that for a moment ever. Exploring the power of your mindset and law of attraction just blows your mind. There are many people who believe it's a load of rubbish but when you truly open your mind the craziest things begin to happen.

**8. Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?**  
Not particularly, young people just got to grab life by the balls and run. Don't fear failure just move mountains and remain focused on your dream.

## **Interview Transcript**

- Interviewer:** Hi today I'm talking with Shai Wolter so welcome and thank you for giving us some of your time today. Shai, for the benefit of the people who may be listening to this interview, can you give us a bit of an idea about who you are and what your background is?
- Shai:** Sure. Hi. Thank you Anthony. Basically I'm only 22 so very young. I started a business in January 2015. Basically - when I was 14, I started in my very first job. I knew from the first day I wasn't going to work for someone forever.
- What I then did from 14 to pretty much 22 was jump between jobs, jump between industries - I racked up so much experience, that I didn't really find anything that made me tick.
- I did work for a fashion designer not long after high school. She basically taught me how to sew and understand the make of a dress which was fantastic. I then have taken those skills and combined them with my absolute massive love for health and fitness and I now design functional sportswear for true active women.
- I just believe that the stuff that's out there on the market is not true for basically active people. I myself have come from lots of frustration and experience in that so I've just combined what I know about how the human anatomy works. I did do some nursing background education in high school.

*Also I'm a qualified personal trainer so I do understand the biomechanics of the human anatomy which I think helps me a lot in terms of the design aspect as well. So basically that's what I do and next year is going to be a big year for me. So it's been about I guess getting things in place this year.*

**Interviewer:**

**Shai, how do you describe yourself as an entrepreneur and why do you describe yourself that particular way?**

**Shai:**

*I would say that I describe myself as an entrepreneur because I guess my understanding and belief of an entrepreneur is someone that has an interest in starting businesses and taking the leap and growing I guess things that can improve and change the world that we live in. It might not be for the present moment, but definitely for the future.*

*I guess that's what I would class myself because going from what I do with sportswear; I've come up with so many ideas that I want to branch out from that. It's seriously is future forward thinking.*

*It's kind of cool but I guess you can't really teach entrepreneurship. It's either - it's bred into you and you just know it, or it's not. I guess my partner - he's not interested in running or owning a business. Whereas me, I'm like give me something new to do. Let's just try.*

**Interviewer:**

**So do you feel it's sort of like a - sort of like an explorer/ path finder type mentality?**

**Shai:** I would say yes but it also comes down to where you find yourself spiritually connected. I've never really been in to I guess self-exploration in terms of spirituality until literally at the end of 2014. I met a lady who has become a really big influence on my life and is now a really good friend of mine and she is a super spiritual person. She basically planted the seed which has now flourished into my first business.

I've learnt to I guess connect with myself on many levels. I've never done that before. I guess internal and a higher self. Yeah. It's hard to explain really. I guess the people who know what I'm talking about will totally connect and understand what I'm saying.

**Interviewer:** Yeah I get that. I've had a very strong personal development journey as well through coming back from some issues in my life. And it is - when you're on that journey, you sort of understand it but if you're not on that journey you think what the hell are they talking about?

**So what is it you actually looking to achieve and why?**

**Shai:** Within myself, I want to - not leave a legacy - but I guess create a better future. For me with my business and my mission solely behind it at the moment is creating a community where women have learnt to love themselves again.

Within the world of technology that we live, it's just crazy what I guess face people are starting to put up when it's not really them. And I feel that body image and self-confidence issues are higher than they've ever been before because how easy is it to jump on

*Instagram and put two different filters on your photo and crop here and crop there and it's just not you anymore.*

*I believe that every woman is beautiful, doesn't matter how big or small or round or tall or yellow or white, it doesn't matter. That's what I want to do with my business. So it's starting as I guess, increasing self confidence in women with really good fit sportswear, but its then going to flourish into something much bigger than that. Create more of a movement for body love. That's where I want to go.*

**Interviewer:**

**Okay. So was there a specific sort of catalyst for this direction of yours? Often times I've found that people I've met along the journey have come to what they do, some because it's just something ingrained within them, they just know it intrinsically and that's what they do.**

**Others because there's been some sort of trauma, catalyst or issue, something they really had to face, and then they said, no I want to help others face this same stuff. So, in your particular circumstance, was it something that was intrinsically you or was there a catalyst and if so, would you mind sharing what that was?**

**Shai:**

*I guess it's a bit of both. I found a lot of observation you know, what goes on and the fat shaming that's recently happened on the internet and those - all those songs that saying guys don't like skinny beep. You know what I mean?*

*I'm a small petite lady. I always have been. I've*

endured my fair amount of teasing you know. Like being called anorexic or a heroin addict? Like, what's wrong with people? Do you know what I mean? I suppose it comes from both.

Yes. My own personal experience with people putting me down and trying to make me feel horrible about myself and just how I look, and then also observing how other people talk about others and talk to each other. It's - what happened to lifting people up and encouraging people to embrace who they are?

**Interviewer:**

**That's a very good question. It's a very good question and one that I don't specifically have an answer for and I guess every one of us has to answer that for ourselves.**

**Shai:**

Of course. And you know it comes again with self-exploration and self-personal development journey and it doesn't matter where you are in life, you can always start now.

I've noticed with my partner; he's been asking the question of what's his purpose in life? You don't - it doesn't come to you - you've got to find it. He's 25 next year, and he's like why am I here? Well I can't help you there honey. You've got to find that out yourself.

My mum - I've just noticed that in her. She's 48 I think and she's never been happier in her life and she's doing something she never would have imagined she would be doing. She's in the Navy!

**Interviewer:**

**It's interesting, I mean you've touched on the spirituality aspects. How do you define spirituality**

**and particularly in terms of entrepreneurship and in terms of the drivers behind it? How do you see that?**

**Shai:**

Connecting spirituality to entrepreneurship would definitely be - to keep yourself going, you've got to be grounded. To know where you've got to go and what decisions you've got to make that are right for you and your business and your mission, your vision and your values is keeping grounded. Therefore, taking yourself out of the busy-ness and craziness of business and just connect back to yourself.

Then in terms of spirituality, it's very different for everyone. I know myself I don't meditate. I would like to learn how to meditate but it's not something that I do as my I guess connectedness. For me it's just going to sit down the beach. I love the beach and I could sit there for hours and hours and not talk, not look at my phone and just connect if you know what I mean. Just breathing within yourself.

And going to the gym. As crazy as that sounds, going to the gym, lifting weights and destroying myself makes me feel so good.

**Interviewer:**

**Okay. So it is that sense of connectedness to something bigger, if I'm hearing you right?**

**Shai:**

Of course. Definitely. Something bigger than you.

**Interviewer:**

**So do you see that as necessarily as something religious, or something beyond that?**

**Shai:**

Well I wouldn't class myself as a religious person. No-one in my family has been - or brought me up that way. I did go to a private school when I was young.

*But even then, my mum told me to always make my own decisions and as much as - reading into spirituality and looking at the Buddhists and what they do and all of the other religions that believe in spirituality, I wouldn't connect myself to any one of them particularly. But I feel in myself connecting to the universe and listening to the universe and hearing what it's got to say. I guess it's like a religion in itself if you want.*

**Interviewer:**

***Shai is there somebody in particular, or - it maybe something else, that really inspires you? And if so, what - who might that be and what is it about that person or that thing that inspires you so much?***

**Shai:**

*I have a couple of people that really inspire me. I would say it would be definitely my two best friends. They are much older than me, but when you're an adult, age doesn't really matter.*

*What inspires me about them is I've heard their stories and they've been in the same position and are in the exact same position as me right now, so we can relate on so many levels there. I mean being so young, I've had so much life experience that most people my age definitely haven't, and will not ever experience in their entire life. So I suppose I can connect with older people on much more, I guess advanced and mature level than a lot of other young 20 year olds.*

*As for - icons that inspire me - Garry - his last name is Vaynerchuk - I can never pronounce it right, but he is a very big entrepreneur. He has made multimillion dollar companies and his videos and stories are very*

*real. He's very down to earth. He doesn't sugar coat anything. He tells you exactly how it is.*

*And that's the type of person I am. Business isn't easy. Entrepreneurship is not easy. You find yourself many days wondering how you're going to find money to do things. Or how you're going to make people find out about this product you've got or how you do share your story that connects with everyone else like it connects with you. There are so many questions that you ask.*

*And then you look for mentors or other people that have gone down your journey and they tell you that it's easy. It was not hard work for them and that's a load of crap. It's - you've got to find people that connect with you. And when I found Garry, I was like wow, how has it taken you so long I guess to find you.*

*But he is - he's amazing. I definitely look to him for inspiration. Because he basically tells you to get off the couch, stop feeling sorry for yourself and go out there and do something.*

**Interviewer:**

**How would you describe that drive? What is the driver inside? What is it you feel that you need to do to get up there and go when other people as you just expressed, will probably just sit on the couch and watch another drama or reality TV show?**

**Shai:**

*The drive - well for me especially is - knowing that I can take my business to a global level. Knowing that I can achieve my mission and vision and more or less fill my values in my business. I know that I can do that. I know the world needs that and why would I*

*stop now? I invested 12 months. I've invested thousands of dollars. I've not worked for someone for 12 months. I don't want to go back to working for someone, so I'm going to make it work. Otherwise, find something else to do with myself.*

**Interviewer:**

**Interesting, you said a couple of times about your mission and vision and values, stuff like that. How did you come to define those?**

**Shai:**

*What felt right? I was recently studying a Diploma of Business and that's where they really drove into you what your vision, mission and values are for both your life and your business.*

*We had to do a series of activities to come to I guess finding out what they were for us. It was a very easy task for me that a lot of other people felt was very hard. All I did was I just sat down. I didn't think about it. I just wrote from the heart.*

*I've always known from day dot what I wanted out of my business, and what I want out of my life and I've just put it together and it's me. I've built my business around my personal frustrations and what I've now discovered is many other people's frustrations on different levels. I guess it all just comes back to myself and how I feel about things and how I observe the world.*

**Interviewer:**

**okay, so those frustrations that you talk about. What sort of things were they - what were those frustrations and are they part of that catalyst to drive you in the direction you're in?**

**Shai:** They definitely are. Frustrations would be - I have no issue in spending money on quality things, but when you get those quality things home or in your life and they turn out to be nothing more than just cheap nasty stuff that just has a massive price tag on it, you kind of wonder why. I know a lot of people are out there and everybody wants money and money makes the world go round. But there's got to be a means to an end. How much do you want for your cheap product?

I suppose again because I'm small, I've always had fit issues. I either cannot find my size because they only make it in one or two per style and there's a lot more size 6 girls or ladies than just one or two. It's quite actually a common size.

Or plus you know I've had lots of problems, because my bone structure is obviously a lot smaller and more tight together, I've found problems with for instance crop tops fitting my back. They get stuck on my shoulder blades, I can't move properly and it's really irritating - oh the list is just endless.

**Interviewer:** For some people it would sound very trivial but I understand the reality of it and I'm not attempting to trivialise it in any way because I really respect the fact that it is often these trivial - what seems trivial things - that are actually drives us to huge successes.

**Shai:** Oh of course. And you know, you cannot - there's not one size that fits all. There is not one shape that fits all. And there will never be one solution that fits all.

*But I guess someone's got to start creating solutions that fix some problems for people.*

**Interviewer:** *Totally agree. You were saying about the people that actually inspire you. You said there was two. There was Garry and there is another?*

**Shai:** *Yeah. My two best friends. So Rebecca Ross and Rachel Phillips. They've both come from very different backgrounds and both have very different businesses to myself and each other. But we all get together regularly and just the connection that the three of us share is something like I haven't shared with people in a very long time.*

*It's - we find that we connect on a very spiritual level together which is really bizarre for them to verse myself, they are very spiritual people. Whereas I'm just beginning my journey I suppose. Well it started 12 months ago but it's still very early days. I'm still learning a lot.*

**Interviewer:** *Believe me, once you start the journey, there is no stopping - you keep on learning.*

**Shai:** *Yeah you do and it's so - it's crazy you know. I've read so many different types of books and yeah, you just get so intrigued and you just keep going and going. It's like a rabbit hole that doesn't end.*

**Interviewer:** *Yeah. I remember a story once about a young man walking up a mountain and he saw this old man coming down carrying this big bag of rocks on his shoulders. And it was the mountain of enlightenment and the young man said to the old man, have you been to the top. And the old man*

just nodded. The young man said what's it like at the top of enlightenment? And the old man put down the sack on the path and he stood up and he just stretched and he just beamed a radiating smile. And the young man stood there just awe-inspired and he said, so what comes after that? The old man just bent down, picked up the sack and just started walking down the mountain again.

Interesting thought isn't?

*Shai:* Why would he be going back down?

*Interviewer:* Well, in American Indian traditions, they actually have a - they draw a spiral which is the Hopi Indians that draw a spiral thing so it starts in the centre and they say that's the life journey. You walk out to a certain point in your life which is about half way through your life and you make lots of mistakes and then for the second half of your life you walk back through the spiral fixing up the things that you made wrong until you're pure again so that you can leave to come back again.

*Shai:* Wow.

*Interviewer:* It's amazing - there's some amazing stuff out there.

*Shai:* There definitely is. I haven't heard that before but it's something I'll have to have a look into.

*Interviewer:* Shai if there was one real message that you would like to give to people who are either thinking about the entrepreneurial journey or about to start out on a business journey, what are some of the reality checks you would like to say to them? What would that be?

**Shai:**

*There's obviously going to be a couple of cliché things in here but - a) it's hard. You have to prepare yourself. You will see so many people try business and within two months shut down shop. Rome wasn't built overnight. I'm 12 months into my business and I'm only just getting started. They say that it's five years before you become established or start having a constant flow of customers. So keep going.*

*Number two. You will always, always come across people who tell you you're crazy or it's impossible or you'll never be able to do it. Guess what, someone did do it before. Look at the internet, look at computers, look at phones. I'll bet they were all told they were crazy. Now look at the world we live in.*

*Anything is possible. If you believe in it enough and you're passionate enough, you can do it. Don't hold yourself back because of finances. I started my business on no money. I still run my business on no money and it works. You just will find a way.*

*You've got to believe in yourself and believe in your passion and believe in your business that much that nothing can hold you back. And it's hard. It will always - you will always come across difficult times. But it's how you deal with them is how you grow and develop as a person and how much stronger your business becomes.*

**Interviewer:**

**So do you have – like some people have success ritual that they do daily to keep them going - do you have anything like that?**

**Shai:** A success ritual? No not really. I would just say look after yourself. You know, for me, exercise is such a big part of my life. If I didn't do that I would be - just go AWOL. I don't what else I would say that you know, you've always got to look after you.

You know, back in the old days, it used to be hard work pays off. These days it's smart work that pays off. So don't work yourself harder, work yourself smarter. If you don't know, learn. If you don't have time to learn, ask someone that knows because your contacts are your gold. Absolute gold. Don't waste time doing things you can get someone else to do for you.

Time is so valuable and precious and if you don't look after yourself, who's going to run your business? Seriously it's so important. You know, your mental health, your physical wellbeing just - yeah - look after you.

**Interviewer:** **It sounds selfish but it's actually not is it?**

**Shai:** No. It's totally true. The moment you work weeks on end and then you kind of take five minutes out for yourself, you kind of just get a aha moment. It's yeah - you will understand to be selfish and business is selfish and you've just got to do it.

**Interviewer:** **Fabulous. Shai is there anything else you'd like to add or think is important - potentially for others who may be following a journey similar to yours albeit in their own way and in their own direction? Is there anything you'd like to add or say to them?**

**Shai:** Yeah of course. Don't ever stop learning and don't give up on yourself. You started for a reason. Just keep going. Nothing is set in stone. Your business will always change directions.

You may never end up where you originally started out planning to go but you just never know where you will end up being because of what you've learnt. The journey is not straight. It is definitely rocky, round and round, up and down, but don't ever stop learning.

Personal development and skills is something you can never have enough of. Just become the best person you can be. I guess equip yourself with as much knowledge as you can. Read books. Read lots of them.

**Interviewer:** Are there specific books that you'd say these are good ones that you've found?

**Shai:** Garry Vaynerchuk has quite a few good books on business. One I'm reading at the moment is *Jab, Jab, Jab Right Hook*. And that's about I guess conquering the internet with business. That's a really awesome book.

Another book which I've just finished reading is called *Key Person of Influence* and I don't know who wrote it, I'm sorry. But there are a lot out there. You just got to look for them and read the reviews. I'm a bit audio person because I can go to the gym and listen to a book while I'm working out, so I'm doing two birds with one stone.

**Interviewer:** That is just time efficiency and leverage isn't it?

**Shai:** Pretty much. And it's all about leverage.

**Interviewer:** I'm intrigued on the spiritual side of things - the journey and the connectedness there because I see a lot of people at all ages are disconnected - what do you think might be the reason why so many people of your age are disconnected. Have you any sense of that?

**Shai:** Disconnected, I'd say technology would definitely be a big interrupter for that but also their education. There's no reason why spirituality can't be taught in school. Why it's not I have no idea. As for so few that are connected, I guess it's how they've been brought up. The people that I know that are my age and thereabouts have been brought up in very spiritual households and have very spiritual parents so I mean it's just rubbed off more than anything.

**Interviewer:** So you're born in the right place?

**Shai:** Well yes and no - it's kind of - it's weird. I guess I met the right people at the right time more than anything because my dad - he is sort of into that stuff, but doesn't really I guess preach it or talk about it, but then my mum is completely opposite end of the scale. I guess my spiritual journey came from my friends more than anything. They were the biggest influence on me.

**Interviewer:** Shai, it's been really a pleasure to talk to you. I have no doubt in my mind about your success. With the attitude you've got, the dedication you've got and the connectedness you've got, you can but succeed.

**Shai:** Thank you very much.

**Interviewer:** You're very welcome. Thank you for spending some time with us today.

**Shai:** No problem. Thank you Anthony and I hope we'll be in contact soon.

## Contact details

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“Use what talents you possess. The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.”

Henry Van Dyke



# Shanley McCray

Opportune Publishing

## **Biography**

Shanley Denise McCray is the Owner & Operator of Opportune Independent Publishing Company and Opportune Marketing. She started her writing career at both her undergrad Universities: Bethune-Cookman University and Florida A&M University. There, she wrote for all on-campus publications, and local newspapers and magazines as well. She went on to produce an award-winning portfolio for her writing style, mastery-level of Associated Press writing style and works within the public relation industry.

Since graduating with her bachelor's degree in public relation and a MBA, she has remained loyal to the communications field. Shanley has had experience working as a public relations practitioner, business English instructor, content & SEO manager, communications & research consultant, author and communications & IT specialist. These were amongst several companies: Chevron Phillips Chemical Co., CapGemini, Florida Chamber of Commerce and ABC English (China).

After living in China for a year, she birthed two companies, Opportune Publishing and Opportune Marketing, in order to give non-traditional writers a chance to become published authors. Both companies tag team an array of clients; assisting with marketing, public relations, editing, formatting, publishing, content writing, ghost writing and much more.

Her future plans are to continue to travel the world, learn additional languages, write more books and expand both her companies.

## **Business**

Opportune Publishing is a full service book publishing company that focuses on non-tradition authorship. Based out of Houston, TX, this company services writers from all over the world. Opportune publishing has made it their business to keep a diligent emphasis on quality and precision, while always allowing innovation and creativity to seep through. Unlike many other publishing companies, all genres are welcome to be published at OP.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

- 1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I am instantly attracted to anything that says “entrepreneur” because I feel that is my new role and title. The experiences and knowledge I’ve gained since starting my own business has led me to want to tell any and every one that is willing to listen about some of my journey. From this interview I would like to gain more exposure, especially on an international level. No matter the geographic location, a person can still take advantage of the services that my business offers. So, if this interview can assist with being sought out by just one person or business in Australia, then it is all worth it.

- 2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

Thus far, my entrepreneurial journey has been a dream, with very few night terrors interrupting it. I have learned more about business, people interaction and myself than ever before. I didn’t know a lot about book publishing prior to starting Opportune Publishing, so I have been (willingly) forced to challenge myself daily to learn all that I can. There have been a few scary things to arise: broken promises, misallocation of money and the effects of sleep deprivation. All in all, since opening my business and running I successfully, I have been able to hold my head a little bit higher because everyday wake up with a sense of accomplishment and purpose.

- 3. What is the ‘BIG difference’ you are looking to make?**

After publishing my first book, ‘Choosing to Decide’, I was inundated with sad stories about dreams that were seemingly never going to come true. So many people wanted to write books or publish their creative works, but since they weren’t actual artists or writers, they deemed it impossible. Which is why I started and named my business

Opportune Publishing; so we can give everyone the opportunity to become a published author.

**4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

I intend to use different platforms and channels to gain exposure for both of my businesses, on a national and international level. Doing interviews such as this one is only the beginning of getting my name and company known outside of the U.S. I also have a deep-rooted passion for travelling, no matter where I go I seek out bookstores and find publications that I could possibly be featured in, or collaborate with.

**5. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

I am mostly motivated by manifestation. When I have the initial consultation with a person and they express their dream or desire to create a business or publish a book, I thrive off of seeing that come true. For me it is creating something out of nothing, which not everyone can say they have done. After services have been completed I feel I have done this twice; I've manifested my dream of helping someone else's vision come to life.

**6. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavors would this change your focus/passion/drive?**

I have already been at a place during my business endeavor that I didn't make much money, if any. But I thoroughly and organically have a passion for what I do. I love writing so much that I would do it for free (again). My drive would probably be heightened because I would continuously try to figure out a way to capitalize on the time I am already spending on it.

**7. Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?**

I get a sense of purpose and drive from knowing that I am growing my business and my business is helping me grow. The direction is not 100% clear as far as long term (10-20 years) but my spirit is very comfortable riding this rollercoaster no matter where and how far it takes me.

**8. Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?**

I would like to add a little piece of advice, or tidbit for anyone thinking about owning a business. Everyone's entrepreneurial journey is different, just because another person's business or life looks cool, doesn't mean that is the one to follow or imitate. Follow and cater to your passion and love for whatever it is you want to do.

## **Interview Transcript**

**Interviewer:** Hi today I'm talking with Shanley McCray from Houston Texas and rather than me give a bit of a background on Shanley's story, it's probably better that because Shanley knows it a lot better than I do, that she does that. So Shanley firstly thank you and welcome and what I'd like you to do is give our listeners a bit of an understanding of what has been your entrepreneurial journey so far?

**Shanley:** Absolutely. Well thank you for having me. I really appreciate. I'm Shanley McCray the owner and operator of Opportune Publishing. We basically specialise in publishing non-traditional writers and poets - just so they are allowed to become published authors or are allowed to publish their works. We've been in business now for a little year and we've published about 12 or 13 books so far.

*My entrepreneurial journey so far has been really great. I've gone through some ups and downs and prior to coming into the publishing business. I didn't really know a whole lot. It really all started with me writing my first book 'Choosing to Decide'. The response I got was that so many people wanted to publish books which I never knew about.*

*So it kind of just started from there where I wanted to help other people make their dreams come true. So far it's been really, really great. We've been able to publish books in all different types of genres and I've worked with different illustrators, different writers and we've published on all major online platforms and we have some books in some book stores as well locally and in various states.*

**Interviewer:**

***So was there a catalyst or something for you to get onto this entrepreneurial journey, because I find in talking with others - for some there is a very clear catalyst and for others it's a very defined, knowing within themselves that that's what they want to be, or that's what they want to do. What was it for you?***

**Shanley:**

*Well, growing up, both of my parents owned their own business so it was almost automatic for me to feel like I want to own my own business one day. But I never knew exactly what that was going to be. So I've always started really tiny businesses - like I had a candle making business once. I was always a writer since I was about nine or ten years old so that drove me into doing content writing which I did as a freelancer but I didn't necessarily own my own business.*

*So my writing drove me into writing my first book and from there, like I said, from the response that I got from that - I just thought that it would be really cool to own a publishing company.*

*I didn't know a single person that had ever owned a publishing company. I didn't actually know another person that had published a book at the time so starting that was kind of difficult in itself but it was really cool because I got to learn the business. I got to network with different people who taught me that it's more than just publishing books.*

*It's different genres, it's different types of works. It can be video; it can be so many different things. So what really just started that off was my experience from having people in my family that owned businesses and then just knowing that there was a great need for a smaller independent publishing company.*

**Interviewer:**

**For the benefit of our listeners, when you say publishing, do you do just the publishing process, or do you provide the editing, artwork and all of those other elements of creating the book as well?**

**Shanley:**

*Yeah, we're a full service publishing company so we help with the editing of it, the marketing of the book, the publishing of it, the producing and putting it on different platforms. So the whole process of publishing a book from the idea, having your manuscript all the way to someone pushing add to their cart on like - what's it, like Amazon.com.*

**Interviewer:** In terms of the publishing and now you've started on the journey, what is it you're actually looking to achieve?

**Shanley:** Ultimately we're looking to achieve - we want to get to a place where no matter who has the idea of wanting to publish something, we want them to know who we are and know that this is a place that we can go to make our dreams come true.

We also have another set to our company which is a marketing company. It's really just our marketing department which is actually transforming into its own business which is going to be Opportune Marketing.

We also would like to ultimately serve small businesses as well. So right now we're doing book publishing - and we publish other works as well. But we also want to be able to go into publishing manuals or even tourist guides for different cities, or anything that has to do with publishing something that someone needs. We want to be that go to person that offers a hands on experience and you're going to get the full service in one place.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so that's about the service of what you do and some of the directional things you're looking to achieve. What's the underlying - if there is one - underlying purpose of that? Is there some sort of big picture that you have for the business and also for you as the person?

**Shanley:** Yeah the - for - the purpose of it all is - every time I think of book publishing - or every time I used to think of book publishing - I would see it on a movie

*where you see a person has this book and they're a great writer and they're just looking for that chance. So they're basically starving and not working for a year or two just to get this book out and after so long - if it's even a possibility - they get to publish their book.*

*So I think that that process is something that is made up in - it's a very real thing, but it doesn't have to be. So the purpose that I'm seeking - or the purpose that I have - is to basically make something that seemingly difficult, or almost impossible be a reachable goal. Something that's very easily obtainable.*

*For me that gives me personal purpose because I'm helping someone make their dreams come true, which is in turn making my dreams come true.*

**Interviewer:**

**So - what are your dreams?**

**Shanley:**

*My dreams - I've always wanted to be writer. Which I've done. - I wrote for different publications. I've written a couple of books. I've ghost written books. I'm an editor now. I'm even a communications consultant as well.*

*So prior to starting this business I thought I was going to just stay in the communications field where hopefully one day I'm a director of communications for a government entity or something. But as of now, my dream is to really grow my business to being the size of a traditional publisher but without all of the hype and all of the difficult entry expectations or limitations that come with it.*

**Interviewer:** As you know from the pre interview information we exchanged, what I'm really looking to explore here is the entrepreneurial spirituality connection. I'm wondering from your perspective, does such a connection exist and if so, how might you describe that for the benefit of the listeners?

**Shanley:** Yeah I absolutely do believe there is a connection. I think when you - in starting a business it should be something that you have a direct and organic passion for. So being that you have such a great passion for it, it's almost embedded in you and I know for me, when it comes to my business, it's everything.

*So even if I make a promise to someone or there's a plan and I have to do something, even if I don't write it down, I'm going to feel like this is something that I need to do or I have to figure out what that is, it's almost like my spirit won't let me miss a beat.*

*That's easy and it hasn't always been that way but I've gotten to the point where I live and breathe my business. It's almost like a spiritual connection for me at least because no matter what I do, whether I'm having an interview, I'm writing something or I'm just talking to someone in the grocery store, it's always a way for my business to come up in conversation, in my thought, in everything that I'm doing.*

*So I think when you're having a business and you're being an entrepreneur you have to take it so much seriously and dedicate yourself to it on another level that working for someone else. So it's definitely a spiritual connection for me at least.*

- Interviewer:** Okay, so if I can explore that a little further. A lot of people who are on a spiritual journey and I find also on the entrepreneurial journey, have some sort of success routines or success rituals they go through. Is that something that you do?
- Shanley:** I don't think I have one so far. Honestly everything that's been happening to me, all the goals I've achieved or things that's happened, someone else has had to celebrate them for me, or remind me to celebrate them or to say we have to do this to make sure this is going to go well.
- For me it's all about just doing it. I try not to get caught up in the process of things as far as - like you said, like a ritual or something - to me it's all about just getting it done. I was trying to think of something that maybe I don't know that I'm doing, but no, I think it's all about just doing it for me.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So do you have any sort of daily routines that prepare you for your day - or a way of winding up at night time or something like that?
- Shanley:** Yeah. I actually have a huge calendar above my desk top computer and I really just go in and just start checking off everything. I have a list of all the clients that I have.
- Even if it's not something that you do immediately, I try to see what I have to do with it for that person that particular day. So that way I make sure I'm not forgetting anyone, even if it's something small like sending an email saying hey I just want to let you know that this will be happening in the next couple of days.

*Just try to always make sure I'm touching every point so that nothing gets left behind and to make sure that I'm at least trying to use my time very wisely.*

**Interviewer:**

**Is there anybody that really inspires you? And if so, what is it about that person or those people that inspire you?**

**Shanley:**

*Yeah. There's actually a person specifically that inspires me. Her name is Queen A Fuller. She is a holistic healer and she owns her own business where she - she's a writer also.*

*So she doesn't just own her own business but she's a writer, she produces organic products for her skin and for - that can also be ingested as well. She's been doing this type of business for the past maybe 30 - 20 or 30 years - and it wasn't something that was extremely popular when and where from when she first started.*

*But now it is starting to boom, especially in places like New York or California and to see that she's still going strong - and stronger than ever and she's much older than the people that are doing it now.*

*It really inspires me to know that if you're passionate about something and you have a love for something, eventually people are going to catch on and your success is going to continue to grow or at least sustain itself.*

*So I hope to be like her in the next 30 years where it's not popular to be a book publisher, but it's still going to be a business that's relevant and that can sustain.*

- Interviewer:** So do you - are there specific people you might read about their journeys that intrigue you and also inspire you. You know, some people are readers, some people are not. I mean, you're a writer but it doesn't necessarily mean you're a reader.
- Shanley:** You know, it's funny that you say that because I am a writer, people assume that I love to read and I actually do not love to read a novel. I don't - I'm not a novel type of person. I don't really like stories at all - not for my personal entertainment.
- But I do read business and self-help books and it's really more so help with my personal development, things like that. So as far as journeys, I do watch a lot of documentaries, especially music documentaries.
- Some of my favourite ones - well my favourite one is probably Nina Simone. I think her story is really amazing and the fact that she has this amazing talent and she's this incredible person and so many people loved her, but then her own personal journey which was something that wasn't I guess - it's not something that was in the eye of everyone else.
- You can see someone from going to this amazing person visually to them basically losing everything that they have but still having that peace within them and I think that's really important in anything that we do. No matter how someone sees you, as long as you have that peace within yourself at the end of the day when you close the door, that's what matters. I really enjoy stories like that. But reading

them and reading someone else's story, I mean that's not really my thing obviously.

**Interviewer:**

**You touched on personal development before. Are there specific elements of personal development that you do to keep yourself on track in terms of health, wellbeing and all those sorts of things?**

**Shanley:**

Yeah. One thing I'm working on now is just speech. About - a little over a year ago, I moved out of the country into China and I almost didn't speak any English at all while I was there. So for whatever reason, it just kind of messed up how I speak a lot and even now in the interview, I kind of get in my head about how I speak a little bit. So that's a really huge thing for me. I really would like to build it back up to how I was and hopefully see past that point.

Other than that I really like working on my writing because we all think - you know at least as a writer you think that you're a really great writer and people look to you as - look to you for being a great writer. But you can always still develop, there's always new trends. New ways that you can say things and new words that you can learn. So those are probably the two major self-development things that I do probably on a daily basis.

**Interviewer:**

**Shanley if you were to actually define yourself as an entrepreneur in words, how would you define yourself and why would you define yourself in that way as an entrepreneur?**

**Shanley:**

That's a good question. If I can define myself in word, I would probably say that I'm passionate and I am organically optimistic and lastly probably I have a

constant thirst. Be it for knowledge, for helping, for just doing something.

Even - I would describe myself as that - I wouldn't describe myself that way I'm sorry. Because when I wake up in the morning or when I go to sleep at night, I'm thinking of the same things, the same content as far as what am I doing? What can I be doing more? How can I better my business? How can I expand my business? How can I come up with new ideas - be innovative? It's kind of everything that I think about, it has to do with my business.

I try not to be selfish with it because I know I can block other things out. But being optimistic for me is knowing that you can do anything and I thoroughly feel that way and I always try to preach that to other people on - you know any level. Especially in owning your own business because it really can be as big or as great as you want it to be or as you know as much work as you put into it, it can be just as big.

I can't remember the first part I said at this point but that would probably be the way I would describe myself as an entrepreneur.

**Interviewer:**

**Excellent. If you had the opportunity to give your younger self some advice about what the entrepreneurial journey may look what advice would you give them? What would you tell them are things to look out for, things to be wary of?**

**Shanley:**

The number one thing I would say be it myself or to someone else would be to do your research. Do all the research that you can do.

*Network. Talk to other people that are in the business. I think a lot of people that I've come in contact with - and even myself a little bit at first - I had this idea that I didn't want to tell anybody what I was doing because I didn't want anyone to steal it.*

*I've found afterwards that that's the direct opposite frame of mind to have because people generally want to help you. So whether they're in the industry, maybe they know someone in that industry. Maybe they can offer you advice about business that's not directly related to business. All of it is very relevant information. So that's part of your research is networking is what I'm trying to say.*

*Another thing I would probably give a piece of advice for is to have really great time management. It's the most important thing. I just like - when you're working for someone else, you're on someone else's time so you're held accountable but to an extent because you can always get another job.*

*But when you own your own business, it's important that you're paying attention to how much time that you're dedicating to one thing versus another thing and how that's relating to how much money that you're getting from that. Or how much of whatever income you're getting from that be it monetary or whatever else.*

*So those are probably the major things - or the best advice I can probably give to someone who is thinking about or is about to start their own business.*

- Interviewer:** **Are there any warnings?**
- Shanley:** Warnings? Um - not necessarily. I think a lot of times when you're starting a business or you're doing anything, you learn from all the hiccups and crazy things that come up. So no. I don't have any warnings personally outside of - just be really open minded.
- Interviewer:** Yeah that's a very good point because when you're actually starting on a journey, you may have an expectation of a result but you've got no expectation or you cannot have an expectation of what you've got to go through to get to that result.
- So by having an open mind it would seem that that's a great way to allow the experiences to flow through you and to enjoy those experiences. You're more likely to do them. I find the people who've got defined or very clearly defined expectations often judge everything against those expectations and therefore don't enjoy the journey.
- Shanley:** Right - a thousand percent agree with you. You always have a better story to tell when some unexpected things happen.
- Interviewer:** Totally agree. Shanley McCray, thank you for spending some time with us.
- Shanley:** Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

## Contact details

**Website:** [www.opportunepublishing.com](http://www.opportunepublishing.com).

**“What is possible is our highest duty.”**

William E. McLaren



# Shannon Hsu

Q2 Dance

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## **Biography**

**Shannon Hsu is an entrepreneur, businesswoman and go-getter.**

As a young woman excelling in her field, owning her own businesses and exceeding expectations, Shannon Hsu is anything but ordinary.

She has built up two thriving dance studios, Q2Dance and created Dance Editorial, a platform to celebrate others in her field, producing her own courses and dance/ theatre productions and all before the age of 30.

## **Business**

Q2Dance is one of the leading Performing Arts Schools in Sydney.

Q2Dance prides itself in creating a space filled with love and support, a home away from home where the students can learn and grow as Artists and young adults.

Dance Editorial is lifestyle, high fashion, music, active and healthy living and of course, dance. But more than that it is a platform to celebrate, support and appreciate other artists' accomplishments and the hard work it takes to succeed.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

### **1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I responded to your call out because I feel I have a message to share and I am a believer in saying yes to any and all experiences and opportunities that come by in life. I am always up for meeting, communicating and working with like-minded and interesting people.

### **2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

My journey so far has been roller-coaster of feelings and experiences. Sometimes, joyous and fulfilling and at other times scary and overwhelming. The journey is fraught with insecurities, let downs, as well as moments of pride and great accomplishments. Being an entrepreneur shines a light on one's strengths and one's weaknesses, as it all rests on your shoulder. The difference between success and failure is purely based on determination and perseverance and how ready you are to work through it all.

### **3. What is the 'BIG difference' you are looking to make?**

I am looking to make a big difference in myself and my future, in my students' lives and also to do my part for the industry. Dance, has given me so much. My life's journey has been entwined with dance from when I was a child. My passion for it and my belief in its power, has driven me, it has brought important people into my life and has given me a career.

For myself, I always wanted to do something I love, live to my full potential, believe in a greater power and take leaps of faith at every opportunity.

Making a difference in the lives of my students at Q2Dance, is really where I want to have the largest impact. Having the power to nurture and lead the younger generations, is a responsibility I take

seriously. I love being able to be a mother to 140 kids, to empower them, to teach them their worth and grow their confidence. I love being able to teach them about life and the skills they need to live their full potential. It might seem that dance classes are insignificant, just an activity for kids to do, but it's so much more than that. It teaches the importance of respect, manners, hard work, learning from mistakes, taking direction, team work and perseverance. I have seen and experienced its power and I love being able to harness it to make a big difference in each life of my students.

I also love being a part of my industry and I hope to bring positivity to it by celebrating others within the industry. Which is why I started Dance Editorial, on top of Q2Dance. Dance Editorial, is purely a platform to extol the hard work it takes to succeed and to understand each other's individual journeys.

**4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

Through my words, my actions, my work and through my students.

**5. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

My motivation is definitely being able to be my own boss, making a career out of a passion and doing what I love.

From a young age, I always wanted more, not more money, but more for me. Every decision I make and have made is a conscious decision to lead a life I am proud of. From living to my full potential, to being honest with myself, even when it is hard to face the truth.

Motivation definitely needs to come from within. You cannot look for it from others, you cannot expect others to motivate you. You need to wake up every morning, motivated to live a full life, to make the right decisions, and to consciously decide to be happy and successful. Success for me is not money, rather, success is living a happy life.

**6. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?**

My father taught me at an early age that money is energy. It comes and it goes! You put out enough good energy and it will come back to you in any way you need it. If that is money, then it will come to you when you need it.

I believe that you must do everything with good intentions. If you ever start anything with negative intentions, whether it is to compete with someone, to destroy someone or for money, it will never be a success.

My focus, drive and passion has never been based on money, so it would never change my path or my decisions.

**7. Do you have a sense of spirituality or spiritual connection to your entrepreneurial direction and if so, please describe what this element looks and feels like?**

Absolutely! I am spiritual and my spirituality has guided me through my entrepreneurial journey, in every decision I make.

I am huge believer. Believer in energy, believer in a master plan, believer in that everything happens as it's meant to and that the universe sends you what you need, but it's up to you to be ready to recognise it and to receive it. I am huge believer in being around good people and having like-minded people around me.

I look back on my journey and there has definitely been a greater energy leading me in my entrepreneurial journey. Too many things have happened, opportunities landed in my path that cannot be explained, or ignored.

It is a feeling of security and a feeling of knowing. Knowing that as long as I am willing to work hard, put aside my insecurities and take leaps of faith that it will always work out. My spirituality has allowed me to have unwavering belief in what I do and what my future holds for me.

**8. Is there anything specific you would like to add and if so, what is it?**

I would like to add a point about bringing focus to the journey of a woman or women in business. I believe in women empowering other women, working together, and for each other. There is such a stigma about women, being 'bitchy' or catty, plus a stigma of women not being able to be 'bossy' as people describe boss as 'bitchy'.

Main stream media promote these stigmas through so many facets, from how they represent women, the words they choose to describe women and how they explain away a women's experience or achievements. I think it is a really important message to get across to younger women that they can do it all, without having to step on others and while owning their power and not being afraid of being the boss.

## **Interview Transcript**

- Interviewer:** Hi today I'm talking with Shannon Hsu of Q2Dance. Shannon welcome and thank you for your time today. Maybe for the benefit of our listeners, you can give them a bit of an overview of who you are and your background and particularly about your entrepreneurial journey so far.
- Shannon:** Okay. Hi Anthony. Thank you for speaking to me today. So I started my business at 21. I started a school just because I was already dancing professionally from the age of 18 and I got to 21 and I was I guess thinking about what I could do for the industry and what kind of future I wanted for myself.
- So I started my journey of starting a business and it just started quite small in a hall that I hired. Then 8 years later, I have two schools, an agency and also a blog.
- The journey has been - it's been hard as most entrepreneurs know. But it's just been very much a journey that I'm quite proud of and I'm happy with where it's led me and all the people that its brought into my life.
- Especially I get to work with kids which is something that I love. I love being able to have a relationship with so many kids and hopefully have a positive influence in their life and lead them not only on their dance journey but also watching them grow as people.

And going through - you know some of the kids at the studio are there from when they're three all the way through to them hitting teenage years and onwards and it's really beautiful relationships that I form with all of them that is a big part of why I love what I do.

**Interviewer:** **Fabulous. So if you think about all of that and I really get what you love to do, what - if you had to sort of bring it down what you are looking to achieve. What is it you are looking to achieve as an entrepreneur?**

**Shannon:** As an entrepreneur, obviously I have big goals and big dreams for the business in itself. Like I said it's been an eight-year journey. I didn't have any monetary backing. So the first few years I worked three or four jobs just to be able to pay for my business.

So from a business point of view, I've always had big goals and big dreams for it which I'm still working towards. It's never ending I guess. So I obviously wanted to start a second school which I did in the eastern suburbs at the start of this year.

I also wanted to expand into a talent agency which I also did. I started putting the foundation for that last year and yeah- and this year we've been getting a lot of jobs through our agency kids and we have about 20 kids on the books now.

Going forward I just want to keep growing the business and expanding where we are. So pretty much with the current studio in Camperdown, I've grown every two years approximately. So every two years I've moved into a bigger space.

*Obviously now starting with the eastern suburbs I've done the same thing. I've started really small in a hall and then this year I'm moving into a bigger space already so I've had a large growth in just twelve months which has made it available for me to move into a larger space starting this year.*

*So I guess a goal for that is that my entrepreneur journey is just to really keep growing the business, seeing how far I can take it. I'm only 29 so I feel like there's so much more that I can do and - but I'm also I guess my entrepreneurial journey has been very much about off the cuff kind of journey. The business has grown as it's needed or as opportunities have come. I have big goals for the business but I kind of I guess for the near future, it's just growing my eastern suburbs venue.*

*Then kind of see where everything else takes me. We're up to about 140 students combined between the two spaces so just growing all those things. Doing a lot more things with the - with media and professionally on a personal level as well.*

*We're taking a trip to LA. I'm trying to grow my training and my business so that we have outreach to LA and grow my connections over there. So I'm actually taking all my performance kids to LA in September to go train there with professional dancers. So I think that's a big part going forward is just to about opening up more opportunity for my kids as well.*

**Interviewer:** It's lovely that you're taking the kids as part of that. It seems that your entrepreneurial journey is not just wrapped up in the business, it's something more than that. What is this something more?

**Shannon:** Well I am a quite - I'm a spiritual person and I feel a lot of my journey has been almost - I don't want to say pre-destined because we do play a big role in every decision that we make and in how we lead and where our life goes - where our life path takes us. But there's definitely a genuine love and passion for what I do.

I'm also a huge believer in things come to you as they're needed including people, the people that come to you - come into your life and also the direction that the business takes has been quite fluid for me. I've kind of taken opportunity as they come. I'm a huge believer in saying yes to every opportunity that lands at your feet and just working really hard and taking those opportunities to the maximum.

I find my spirituality plays a huge part in my journey and the decisions that I make as well. I never make any decision based purely on the monetary value of what will make me money. Sometimes it's just - a lot of time it's just gut feeling. A lot of the time it's about the energy that I get from certain people or a certain decision, especially growing the business. It takes a leap of faith.

You need to go from paying x amount of rent or x amount of kids to going okay I'm going to take the next step. Then you could really second guess yourself about how much it's going to grow and if it's

*going to be something that's achievable.*

*And I've always - when it comes to those kind of decisions - I've always taken it through how I feel and through, I guess a gut decision and just jumping head first and just believing that I will always land on my feet.*

*That has really carried me through I guess - through my journey of eight years of running a business. Especially starting out such a young age without any backing or without any partners helping me with the business. I was very dependent on my own feelings and dependent on my own decisions and having to live by every decision that I make.*

**Interviewer:** *Is this something Shannon that you've learnt from family or is this something that you feel that's intrinsically in you that you are expressing. Because I've found in talking to others, some people have got a very entrepreneurial familial background whereas others have seemed to - it just sort of comes from nowhere.*

**Shannon:** *For me I actually - so my family background is we moved - we are actually immigrants. My parents escaped a war back in Sri Lanka and I moved to Australia when I was seven. So growing up we didn't have money - we didn't have a lot of money at all. But I think - so my parents are definitely not business owners or entrepreneurial themselves.*

*What they did teach me was work ethic and the importance of drive, working hard, being focused and I definitely think I took those qualities from my parents because I watched them work three, four*

jobs.

*Also you know, I saw the hard work does definitely get you results. We went from renting a two bedroom apartment for four of us to owning - my parents owning their first home within the first two years of moving to Australia.*

*So seeing that growth from their point of view and also seeing their determination was definitely something that was instilled in me from a young age. I think the entrepreneurial drive came from a combination of the work ethic that they instilled in my plus my own personal goals and wishes for what I wanted in life for my future.*

**Interviewer:**

**Okay. Now you mentioned obviously coming as an immigrant to Australia from Sri Lanka. Was that a sort of catalyst for you in terms of your entrepreneurial journey or was there some other catalyst to get you on the particular path that you are on?**

**Shannon:**

*Definitely. I think coming from that kind of background I wanted to always make sure that I was always my own boss. I also wanted to make sure that I was in control of my path, both in life and career and finances. It also, you know, made me want to make sure that I have a solid future.*

*I guess my parents gave up a lot in order for me to get the best education that I could to give us a better start in life and to give us a better future and I wanted to make sure that I did them proud and that I lived up to those expectations. Not only what they*

*put on me but also what I put on myself. I want to make sure that I exceeded those expectations.*

**Interviewer:**

**Okay, makes sense. You touched on the spirituality before and as you know, the focus of this interview and the book that's coming out it is very much around the connection between spirituality and entrepreneurship. Is this something you see in other entrepreneurs you know and other people that are successful? Do you see those similar sort of connections with them as well?**

**Shannon:**

*Yes I do. Especially because a lot of the entrepreneurs that I know are obviously are in the artistic rounds. I think dance and art and music in general has a lot of spirituality around it. It tends to be someone's passion. It tends to be someone's love more than just a job.*

*So a lot of people that I speak to and a lot of people I have around me in my business and in my career, definitely are all very spiritual. They take their jobs as a vocation as opposed to just another career or another job. I know that they all base a lot of their decisions on their spirituality and they make that a big part of their decisions and their goals and their life as well. I think definitely in that arts arena spirituality comes with it for sure.*

**Interviewer:**

**You touched on other people and the fact that they are sort of inspired by others. Who inspires you and why?**

**Shannon:**

*I definitely I think be inspired by my mum whose actually technically my step mum. But she was the one that brought us to Australia and she is the one*

*who has - you know growing up, she was also - she was very much the leader of our family and she was a great female role model for me.*

*She was a great example of hard work and doing what you want to do and having - basing it on love - and basing it off focus and dedication and she was very much an example of selflessness. She gave up a lot of her own - for two kids who were technically not even her biological kids. So she definitely has been a huge inspiration and definitely a role model that I look up to and I base a lot of I guess the type of woman I want to be around her.*

*As far as other people in the industry, I mean - I recently was lucky enough to meet Bonnie Lithgow from So You Think You Can Dance fame and I was quite taken by her and quite inspired by her as well because she is also a great example of women in business.*

*She's quite - extremely successful but I think more than her success and more than what she's achieved, what really took me was how open and humble and giving she was. She was willing to give her time. She was willing to speak to you on her level. She was willing to welcome you into her circle and I think that's something that's really important because there can be so much - you know in any industry there can be a lot of I guess negativity or where people are untrusting and she was the total opposite of that.*

*She was beautiful human being and she's really inspired me because I hope that I will be - you know*

*she's someone that I can look up to and hopefully achieve as much as she has.*

**Interviewer:**

**Have you noticed this with other entrepreneurs as well - that they seem to be... let me first categorise entrepreneurs - in my definition there's two types of entrepreneurs. There's the entrepreneurs who are doing things out of their passion and then there are entrepreneurs who are purely in it for the money.**

**Nothing wrong with either one, just a statement of separation.**

**I find the ones who do things from their passion have those qualities you've just described and that willingness to share, that willingness to grow others. There's not a sense of being threatened by the world, whereas the people on the money side of it seem to be much more judgemental, protective and much more insular. Is that something you've also experienced?**

**Shannon:**

*Absolutely. Definitely. I agree with that whole heartedly. On a personal level I'm the same as well. I think doing something that you love and that you're passionate about - you want to make sure that you're sharing that with others.*

*Whereas money can be quite materialistic and I guess shallow so it's something - if that's your main focus or your main goal that you could be quite defensive about and protective of.*

*Because you feel like someone is as good as you - someone is starting to do the same thing as you that*

*they'll take away that money or take a part of your profits or you know, anything like that. Whereas when it's a passion or a love, you want to grow it, you want to share it and you want likeminded people to be in the journey with you and I know from personally, I love meeting likeminded people.*

*I love working with others. It's something that I get a lot of happiness and joy out of. This is not something that I just want to do by myself in a corner counting my dollars. It's definitely something that I want to share in other people's journeys with.*

**Interviewer:** *If you had to define yourself in words or define your entrepreneurship in words - how would you define it for yourself?*

**Shannon:** *For me it's definitely been - it's been a roller coaster. Rollercoaster would be one thing - one word that I would describe my journey. It's been, I guess, a leap of faith would be another couple of words that I would describe it.*

*Because I didn't really have anything behind me that would make me secure in the fact that this would be a success. It was purely belief in myself and being able to just jump head first and trust that I would make it work.*

*Some other words would be - it's hard. It's mentally draining. It's emotionally draining especially when you're doing something based on passion. But obviously you still need to be able to make a profit in order to grow that passion. So it really pulls you in different ways.*

*It's emotionally draining when you have to work three jobs and you don't know if you can pay the rent next month. So that's definitely been my journey and then obviously you get to a point where you can kind of take time to work on the business instead of working in the business and even that is a journey in itself.*

*Because then you've got to bring other people in to your business and you've got to make sure that you trust them and that they love it and are as invested in the business as you are. That was a huge leap of faith to me to be able to bring other people into the business. Just because I was so passionate about it. I wanted to make sure whoever came into my business was just as passionate.*

*So the journey has definitely been - there's been definitely hardships but at the end of the day, there's certain things that happen that make you smile and make you go, okay it was all worth it.*

*When there's just an email telling you that - from a parent telling you how much the kid - their daughter or son has grown in confidence or how they used to be really shy in school and now they're really breaking out of their shell.*

*Or a simple walking into the studio and being greeted by smiles and happiness and joy. Those little moments definitely make it all worthwhile. But in the background there's a lot of ups and downs that you have to get through and you've got to be determined and you have to persevere.*

- Interviewer:** It sounds a little bit like the duck on the water, you know, serenely gliding across the water but paddling like anything underneath.
- Shannon:** That's exactly what it is.
- Interviewer:** Many people that I've spoken to Shannon have some sort of success ritual - and you touched on this before - throughout the entrepreneurial journey, there's highs and lows - there's emotional drains, there's all of these different things. Do you have some sort of success ritual or success routine or specific way of keeping yourself motivated and inspired to keep going?
- Shannon:** Yes and it all definitely changes. I think at the start when it wasn't as big as it is now, I definitely had more time to sit down and really think things through and maybe take some time for myself. To come and free energise and you know take moments to kind of I guess appreciate what I'm doing and have gratitude and be thankful. I think that's a really big thing.
- Because I think sometimes negativity and the hardships can overwhelm you and the only way you can get through that is to always be looking at the positive and to be grateful and have gratitude for the things that you have achieved.
- I think when you're an entrepreneur it is very much your heart and soul in the business so you take everything personally. Every kid that drops out or every complaint or every time you don't come first or anything like that - depending what your business is - you take that personally, as a personal assault or a

*personal let down.*

*I think getting to a point where you can look past that and think positive thoughts and take time to re-energise yourself is something that was really important for me. Especially when it is emotionally draining.*

*Because it can get you down. It can make you go I don't want to do this anymore. It can make you go, why am I giving so much of myself to this and not getting the results that maybe I'd hope for or dreamed of.*

*So in those moments it's about taking a step back and appreciating what you have done and then also thinking of - alright okay so that didn't work, what can I do now? What's the next step? What's the next role?*

*For me that has been a real motivator is that I'm always looking ahead, always looking to improve myself. Always looking to improve the business and also seeing where I can grow it and where I can change it and being decisive. I think being decisive is a really important thing because you can doubt yourself.*

*You can maybe put too much emphasis on what someone else thinks or what someone else wants to do. But if you're the boss and if you - this is your passion and this is what you want to do, you need to be decisive. Make those decisions that need to be made. Think of the bigger picture and also implement things that you need to do in order to reach your*

goals. And constantly looking ahead and having goals set out for yourself is extremely important as well.

**Interviewer:**

**Very interesting. Just as a last question - from where you are now, knowing what you now know - if you were able to give your younger self some advice, or it may be somebody who you come across who's aspiring to go on to the entrepreneurial journey, what would you advise them?**

**Shannon:**

*Well if it was someone that I am advising, I would definitely tell them to make sure that you're doing this for the right reasons. It's really important to have a clear focus on why you're doing it. A lot of people will say to me I want to start a dance studio. My mum says I should start a dance studio. Or it looks like it would be easy or it looks like it would make me money or anything like that. I think those reasons are definitely why you should not start any business.*

*Obviously because I started my business from a passion point of view, that is definitely what I would tell anyone that I was mentoring, is to make sure that you find your passion and you do it always 100% for the right reasons.*

*Because you love it. Because you want to do something better, not only for this world, but for the person that's sitting in front of you, or standing next to you. It just needs to be - you're changing the world but it needs to be a clear focus on some sort of bringing some sort of goodness into everything that you do.*

*I would also tell them to get good advice, especially*

*financially. Especially in the first couple of years of running a business, of budgeting and making sure that you're ready for growth.*

*And not growing too fast as well. That's a really important key because I know a few businesses and a few companies are now closed down purely because they've grown too fast and they haven't done their budgeting or gotten their finances in order. I think that's a really important key message.*

*The other thing is to sometimes not to grow too fast. Take your time. Make sure that you've got everything lined up properly and make sure that it's growing at a steady rate. I guess there's that story of the turtle and the hare. Sometimes it's not how fast you get there, but it's about doing it properly and doing it - you know doing it with good advice and with the right intentions.*

**Interviewer:**

**Fabulous. Shannon Hsu. Thank you very much for your input. I really appreciate it.**

**Shannon:**

*Thank you so much. Thank you for your time and for speaking to me and wanting to hear my story.*

## **Contact details**

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“The ultimate goal should be doing your best and enjoying it.”

Peggy Fleming



# Vanessa Cullen

MoreThanPKD

## **Biography**

Vanessa Cullen is a triathlete, entrepreneur, speaker, writer, PKD Australia Ambassador and wellbeing warrior.

She has both Endometriosis and Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD); one of the few remaining incurable and untreatable diseases left in the world today. Having PKD adds more fuel to her fire, and she has found great purpose in leading others to make the most of each and every day.

By day, Vanessa owns and manages one of Australia's leading boutique interior architecture studios; Forward Thinking Design, creating restaurants, shops and other commercial premises. By early morning and of an evening, she swims/bikes/runs. Just last year, Vanessa represented Australia in the Sprint Triathlon Age Group World Championships in Chicago. She is a strong advocate for leading a balanced life and is also the face behind the fitness and clean-eating website [www.morethanpkd.com](http://www.morethanpkd.com) - a social enterprise she created to empower people to take control of their own health and to reach their full potential (with a specific focus on sufferers of chronic conditions (especially PKD).

**Business** - [morethanpkd.com](http://morethanpkd.com) is a social enterprise intended to empower people to take control of their own health and to reach their full potential (with a specific focus on sufferers of chronic conditions (especially PKD).

The website tells the story of Vanessa Cullen - a plant-based triathlete and trail runner with Polycystic Kidney Disease, IBS and Endometriosis. Through More Than PKD, Vanessa seeks to present her ongoing inspiring story about meeting life's challenges head on, staying optimally well and succeeding in both endurance sports and business.

More Than PKD is also a platform for providing legitimate scientific resources, holding expert seminars on nutrition, health and performance, and launching practical initiatives to create REAL positive change in the world.

## **Responses to Initial Questions**

- 1. Why did you respond to my call-out and what do YOU want from the interview and this experience?**

I'd like to spread the word about [www.morethanpkd.com](http://www.morethanpkd.com) to change the lives of more people around the world.

- 2. How would you describe your entrepreneurial journey so far?**

Forward Thinking Design [www.forwardthinkingdesign.com.au](http://www.forwardthinkingdesign.com.au) has been a long process of learning, systematising, struggling, crying and rejoicing. [www.morethanpkd.com](http://www.morethanpkd.com) is a new born with great potential. The journey so far has been tough but if something matters enough it will never be easy.

- 3. What is the 'BIG difference' you are looking to make?**

Inspire sufferers of PKD, and the general public, to embrace health, wellbeing, fitness and plant-based clean eating so they reach their potential in joy and love of life.

- 4. How do you intend to get your message out to the world?**

[www.morethanpkd.com](http://www.morethanpkd.com), writing, speaking, social media

- 5. What motivates you in terms of your entrepreneurial drive?**

To make the world a better place. Live for the moment and make the most of every opportunity.

- 6. If you knew you would make no money from your endeavours would this change your focus/passion/drive?**

No

## **Interview Transcript**

- Interviewer:** Hi today I'm speaking with Vanessa Cullen who is an entrepreneur from the Sydney area and rather than me tell you Vanessa's story, first off Vanessa welcome and thank you for spending some time and being part of this project.
- Vanessa:** No thank you. It's a great honour, thanks.
- Interviewer:** You're very welcome and the honour is really all mine. For the benefit of the listeners maybe you could give us a bit of an idea of what your entrepreneurial journey has been so far.
- Vanessa:** Sure. So I first started Forward Thinking Design which is an interior architecture company. We specialise in commercial work. We don't do any residential. We design the interior of shops and restaurants, offices, that sort of thing. I actually started that out whilst I while still at university because I was approached by a lot of different people to start doing small project. Whilst I was at university, I spent some time getting experience with different architectural firms. I ended up coming out into employment but I always sort of had the business in the back ground with little bits and pieces of work.
- As time went on I grew somewhat dismayed with the ethics in the industry. I wasn't really happy with what I was seeing in terms of employers' behaviour towards other staff, towards their customers in terms of ethics and particularly in the area of respect of intellectual property of other providers as well. I built up enough of my own work to make it a full

*time job so I decided well if I want to be able to sleep at night and live with myself then I may as well just do this as a business and do it my way and that way I wouldn't be compromising on my ethics.*

*Over time I've built up a business that has now become quite successful. It's a fully-fledged company with multiple staff. We've won numerous business awards and accolades.*

*So I started out when I was 23 years old and it's taken about 12 years to build it to where it is today but it's become this amazing thing that supports me, supports my staff, is a real pride and joy to us all and has allowed me to now do other things in my life.*

*Things that include representing Australia in Triathlon and having the time to be able to dedicate to that and also launching a new entrepreneurial endeavour, I guess you'd call it which is morethanpkd.com.*

*It's a health and wellbeing website and it's specifically dedicated to people with Polycystic Kidney Disease which is a condition that I have. It's about inspiring people to live a healthy, happy life, get out there, get active, eat right, look after themselves and really to tell my story in the hope that it will inspire others.*

**Interviewer:**

**So who inspires you?**

**Vanessa:**

*You know, every day people. Not famous people, not the usual suspects. Not those who have book deals and all that sort of stuff. Two really great examples - there are two gentlemen that I ride and do triathlon with.*

*One is 70 years old and he just goes off over to New Zealand and cycles across New Zealand as something to do. There's another guy who's actually older than that - I think he's about 76 and he's still doing triathlons. He comes out and rides with us, swims, runs, all this sort of stuff.*

*These are just normal, everyday people and that blows me away. Age is not a barrier. They don't complain about aches and pains or anything like that. They just get out there and do it. So it's those sorts of people.*

*I also have a great business mentor, Ron who is the majority owner of Amber Tiles and Oz Design Furniture and he has been the most incredible help to me over the years. I would definitely say he's one of my inspirations and one of my greatest assistants in the journey that I've had.*

**Interviewer:**

**So, Vanessa what is it you're actually looking to achieve on your entrepreneurial journey?**

**Vanessa:**

*Well I think with Forward Thinking Design, I really wanted to create a company that I was proud of. Something that would put a roof over my head but would be everything that I imagined and wanted it to be. We do beautiful work and we create amazing businesses for our clients. That's really the key. I always wanted to create a design firm that helps other people to create really successful businesses.*

*For us it's less about the pretty stuff and winning awards - I mean we do that - but it's really about the success of the company that our customer is setting*

up or is expanding. I'm really passionate about business and business processes and the strategy behind business in general so that's the thing that really excites me about Forward Thinking Design.

We look at strategy. We look at the demographic, customer research - the strategic side of it - looking at how shoppers shop and how they think before we do any of the design. We're starting to work with some really large companies on that. That's so exciting for me because if we can help other people to succeed that's really what we're about.

And I guess More Than PKD also reflects that aim as well. It's kind of more of a personal level I think. Partly with my experience of having PKD and seeing that there's only negativity about it when you get online. I really want to create something that's very positive for people to be able to go to this website as a resource and cheer them up on those hard days and give them ideas about how they can live a better life.

Because it's really I guess - in a nutshell for me - it's about making the world a better place, as cliché as that may seem. It boils down to that really.

**Interviewer:** I don't think there's anything clichéd about it at all. I would sincerely hope and pray that more people would actually see things the same way.

**Vanessa:** That's great.

**Interviewer:** You talk about your PKD - a health condition that could be a catalyst for an entrepreneur or a journey and possibly was in terms of launching the new venture.

**But in terms of your own entrepreneurial journey, was there a specific catalyst for it or were you from a family of business people, entrepreneurial people and it was sort of a learned, natural thing for you to do?**

**Vanessa:**

*I'm completely not part of a family of entrepreneurs, no. My family background is pretty standard - dad worked in the bank for most of his life and it's that sort of thing that you get a job and you keep that for your entire existence.*

*So yeah, starting a business was quite a new thing, quite a different thing and I really didn't have anyone I could look to for that experience so I had to find my way on my own. I suspect that's why the first few years were particularly difficult.*

*If it weren't for the fact that I'm very conservative financially, I probably wouldn't have made it. But that was really just my nature. Probably for me the entrepreneurial side of things has come from a really different perspective. It's not come from business experience.*

*I would say that I'm quite a tenacious person and that comes from having had a lot of health problems through my life and a lot of family traumas and dramas and stuff like this. I did not have an easy upbringing and a lot of the things I've been through personally have made me this person who - I just - I get an idea and I just want to make it happen.*

*I understand that things don't just happen, that you*

have to create them. That if there's an opportunity there, it doesn't matter how much you've got on, you've got to grasp it and run with it because it won't be there the next day. So I think it actually comes from my nature more than any experience with business or anything like that.

**Interviewer:** What you've just touched on is very interesting in the sense of - as you know from the pre-interview information we exchanged - I'm exploring spirituality as part of entrepreneurship.

In terms of your way of thinking and some of the commentary you've made, it sounds almost like a spiritual connection of going through the trials and tribulations. Would you see it that way? Or define it that way? Or how would you define it?

**Vanessa:** I guess it depends on your definition of spirituality or whether you see it as a philosophy I guess.

In my case, yeah, there was a real defining point in my life when my sister who is two years younger than me had a brain haemorrhage. She was this gorgeous girl. She was fantastic at sport, academically, she was just amazing. She was 14, 15 years old and just out of nowhere she had a brain haemorrhage. It wasn't caused by an accident or anything. It's just happened to be a health issue that none of us saw coming.

And she's off in hospital and had to rebuild her life from scratch. Literally learn how to walk and talk and do all these things again. Within 12 months of that, she then had a stroke and had to start again from the same basis. She's gone on to finish university and she has quite a number of disabilities.

But at the time that she was going through all of this I was doing my HSC and I became the carer to my younger brother as well. That was a really, really difficult time, but by the time I finally got myself together and emerged from going through all that, what I realised is that you don't know if you're going to be around, you know an hour from now, or a day from now or a year from now.

So you'd better just make the most of the time you've got. You've got to make the most of things right now. I think that sort of philosophy, that belief - that's kind of where my heart is and that's the drive - everything I do is just this compulsion I guess and this realisation that there's this sense of urgency for life and to make the most of that. Because you just know nothing is guaranteed. So I think that underpins most of what I do really.

**Interviewer:**

**Within all of that do you actually have some sort of success ritual or routine of you know, looking after yourself and doing things that you think is an integral part of being strong as an entrepreneur?**

**Vanessa:**

Absolutely. I've learnt the hard way about burnout and overworking yourself and those sorts of things. Also the emotional attachment that you have to your business and to everything that goes on with it, particularly when you've first started. Whilst we all need to care about what goes on in our business, you do need some distance. If everything that goes on in it is internalised emotionally, it literally will kill you.

Something that I've kind of learnt over time is that your business is only healthy as you are. If you're very

*much involved in it and your health is just going to the pits and you're stressed out all the time, how are you supposed to motivate a team like that? How are you supposed to look after customers? How are you supposed to do anything if you're not looking after yourself?*

*And particularly for those who have families, in my case I don't, but for those who do, usually the family is going to very much depend on that emotional food. If you're the breadwinner or if you're one of the parents, how are you going to look after the kids, the family, and the partner if there's nothing left of you? So I'm really careful about making sure I've got balance in my life now. It's actually more of a priority than anything else.*

*The first thing that goes in my diary each day is actually my training for triathlon. That goes in before my business meetings because I know if I don't do it that way, the business will take over and exercise won't happen. I won't cook my meals, none of this sort of stuff will occur. So if anyone wants to learn from my experiences, just learn that. You've got to take care of yourself.*

**Interviewer:**

**For some people that may sound selfish, but actually I don't believe it is. I mean, if you're not looking after yourself, how can you look after others?**

**Vanessa:**

*Yeah. That's right. You do think it sounds selfish, but it's just a fact. It's do that or you're not going to survive. It's sort of like tap water isn't it? If you don't look after the source, you're not going to get water*

that you can drink at the end of it. It's the same thing.

If you don't look after the source which is going to be you until you can fully step out of your business, then what are you going to get out of it? You're not going to reap the benefits if you can't look after that one core thing - your health.

**Interviewer:** **Yeah and sadly for some, you may not even be around to reap the benefits.**

**Vanessa:** This is it. So many people kill themselves with work.

**Interviewer:** **Very true. Another question - if you had to define yourself in words as an entrepreneur, what would that definition be and why?**

**Vanessa:** Dogged determination. I think for me it's about - you fall down, you pick yourself back up. You've got to kind of realise that sometimes things seem like a massive drama like probably one's life is on the line. You've got to put things into perspective and for me I think I've just kind of relied on my tenacity, determination and just hard work really.

**Interviewer:** **With that tenacity though, is there a point where you can see something is actually not going to work and it's time to walk away? That the obstacles are actually rerouting rather than just that doggedness of actually trying to push and bulldoze your way through?**

**Vanessa:** Definitely. There's a point where you, excuse the expletive, realise you are pushing shit up hill. You've got to decide that it's not worth it any more. After some marketing things that we've tried, we've had to

*make the decision between us as a team that it's just not worth it. I think probably the biggest aspect to that has been, you've got to really clearly define your market and if that market isn't there, then there's no point trying to create the means. You're just playing with nothing.*

*It's about working out exactly where you stand, where your niche is, where your position in the market is, identifying who your market is so you're really clear on that and not trying to just spray and pray. You've got to be really specific about who you're going after and address that. Really get to know them. Do your research. Understand these people because otherwise you might as well walk away from what you're trying to do.*

*Too many of my clients create businesses because they woke up one day and said oh I would really like this, or I think this should be. You ask them how much research they've done and they say none.*

*Just because you think something doesn't mean there's enough people out there, in the place that you're going into, that actually want that. You can't be a customer basis of one (which is you). It's not that you're creating it for yourself. So I think that's one of the places where I see people can have all the tenacity and determination in the world but if they haven't actually done the research and checked that there's any demand for they're doing, they really need to walk away.*

*And they need to know when to walk away and that can be very hard emotionally but it is something that*

you need to do sometimes. Just cut your losses and walk.

**Interviewer:**

**Does that also mean walking away from clients at times?**

**Vanessa:**

Absolutely. I've definitely sacked clients which is a funny thing but you actually need to do that sometimes. Unfortunately, there are some people out there who, as much as you try to qualify with them what exactly they want and need, and try to define the value of your work, they're just not going to see it that way. They will devalue your services. They will be unclear on what they want and no amount of time will gift them with that clarity. It's not going to get anywhere before you're just haemorrhaging your cash flow basically. I've had to end contracts. Sometimes it's really big companies too. It might not be the small ones.

If it's not working, they're not paying on time, if they're not respecting what you do, if you're not making good money on it, if they're wasting your time, then you've got to be able to walk. At the same time, what I've learnt is that you have to have really good systems in place to make sure you don't bring those clients on in the first place and that you identify them quickly and nip it in the bud. Some of them are redeemable as well. If you think you've got one of those clients, there may be ways that you can pull them into line and control the relationship and control the situation before you actually do have to fire them.

**Interviewer:** Very good information. A final question. If you had to look back and give your younger self some advice on the journey of an entrepreneur, or even potentially one of our listeners who is a budding entrepreneur in their own right – what's a key element of advice you would give your younger self or those people as to what you think they need to know about being an entrepreneur.

**Vanessa:** Number 1 is definitely that you need to understand business because you can be the best baker, electrician, you can be the best at your thing that you do, but business is a different thing altogether. It's a skill in itself. There's no good going out there being very good at what you are technically capable of doing and not really having any business knowhow. I don't believe that means you go out and do a course because I think that a lot of the education out there is not very practical. But I think what you need to do is look at information from people actually running businesses and ask for help and get mentoring. Joining business groups initially is fantastic and be humble enough to ask for advice and ask people to assist you. You'll find you'll get a few knockbacks but if you're open to people and respectful and say look I've done my research, I've found out about you and your business and I'm trying to do this. Can you give me some insights here, or is there some way we can work together or whatever? You can build towards strong relationships and it can be actually beneficial to both. I mean, mentors receive benefits, not just mentees.

SO my suggestion to anyone starting a business would be to find out about the business side of things

*and just ask for help. Be ready to get assistance with the things that you don't understand.*

**Interviewer:** **Fabulous words of advice. Vanessa Cullen, thank you for your input today.**

**Vanessa:** **thank you**

## **Contact details**

Website: [www.MorethanPKD.com](http://www.MorethanPKD.com)

**>PKD | MORE THAN PKD**

# Our observations

In listening to these interviews and reading the transcripts we have come to realise some common themes that run through our entrepreneurs with heart. We trust these observations provide you (the reader) with some useful benchmarks of how others make a difference that can help you prepare and become successful in your own entrepreneurial heart journey.

**Common element 1** - all have seen an issue or experienced a difficulty that has touched them emotionally at a very deep level. A level where they have felt compelled to do something. A level that has got them off the couch or out of their comfort zone to take on the task so they can make a difference around what has got them charged up.

**Common element 2** - all speak about passion or an inner driving force that inspires (rather than motivates) them to keep going despite any criticism or ridicule and despite facing many obstacles along the way. Some see this as spiritual, some as intuition and some don't think about it yet ALL talk about passion and purpose as being the core driver of their actions.

**Common element 3** - all actively participate in learning whether that's through reading, studying, listening to podcasts, watching YouTube videos, networking with peers or seeking mentoring. This appears to be a constant element for increasing skill, knowledge and experience that's part of the recognition that they don't know it all and their desire to do the best that can be done.

**Common element 4** - all speak about the potential to work 24/7 and the need to ensure they have balance in their lives. They all talk about deliberately taking time out for self to recharge the body and mind. For some this is done through meditation, others through exercise and others a simple walk along a beach with their dog. The activity doesn't really matter, it's the conscious choice to look after the self that does.

**Common element 5** - all speak about putting in long hours of work to get the job done especially in the formative years. Many talk of sharing the load with partners or by hiring staff/contractors/service providers so they can concentrate on the main game and do what they are best at rather than getting caught up in the stuff that consumes time and gives little return for effort.

**Common element 6** - all are givers and generous with their time and resources, especially to those they feel are willing to grow. Whilst they don't necessarily say this, they all appear to be 'teachers' helping empower those they have decided to support. Interestingly, every one of the 11 interviewees stated they would do what they do irrespective of personal reward. This doesn't mean they don't want to earn good money. They typically see the financial success of their business as crucial to helping those they have chosen to support. The difference is they grow their financial base so they have the ability to support/help more people rather than fill their own bank accounts.

**Common element 7** - all are real - in other words, they recognize their strengths and weaknesses. They embrace their faults, eccentricities and limitations and ask themselves 'how can I move past these?'

This doesn't mean they don't have issues to overcome, problems to solve or fears and insecurities. It simply means they see these 'obstacles and challenges' as growth opportunities that will make them stronger and wiser rather than barriers to success.

**Common element 8** - all are grateful for what they have, who they are, the support that is available to them, the help that comes their way and the results they achieve. Yet you won't hear them seeking accolades for themselves, they accept these because they help publicise their cause.

# Our own Entrepreneurial Heart

It's hard to take on a project like this and read the journeys of our entrepreneurs with heart without being inspired to make a difference.

Our own journey is one of providing both support and a vehicle of voice to the many individuals choosing to make their difference and thereby help create a better world for us all.

Our background is one of business development, business skills training, business mentoring and business marketing under the brands of Transform YOUR Business, Business Success Radio and now Entrepreneurial Heart.

Our current intention and direction is to support those on the entrepreneurial journey with 3 things...

1 - To provide a voice to get their messages out to the world via our Entrepreneurial Heart books and podcasts

2 - To provide connections both for and between entrepreneurs so they can get assistance along the way

3 - To raise money through the sale of Entrepreneurial Heart books and to use our profits to help fund worthy entrepreneurial projects. 50% of your purchase price for this e-book (i.e. \$5) goes to this fund.

What can YOU do?

The answer is simple - not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur with heart BUT every one of you can help us support these worthy entrepreneurs (and those yet to come in future Episodes of Entrepreneurial Heart) by sharing their stories and encouraging your colleagues, friends and families to purchase a copy of our Entrepreneurial Heart e-books.

# About the Author/Facilitator

**Anthony M Turner's passion is helping business owners and individuals 'achieve their best' in life and business.**

Anthony's business career began in the corporate arena where he worked his way through a variety of Sales, Management, Marketing and General Management roles, often with State, National and/or International responsibilities.



In 2003 he created his own life skills and business development consultancy (Transform your Business) which specializes in helping individuals and businesses achieve their best. He both uses and teaches many easy to learn, simple to use and highly cost effective ethical business/marketing tools that are drawn from his own 'real life' experience and from the significant training he has received in Personal Development, General Management, Marketing, Strategic Planning and OH&S.

Anthony has coached over 4000 independent small businesses and spent 4 years assisting business affected by the Black Saturday Bushfires and Victorian Floods. He holds qualifications in Management, Training & Assessment, is a Manager for the Small Business Mentoring Service (SBMS), Author of 2 business books, Dream to Reality... connecting heart & Business, Hamster no MORE... surviving the small business treadmill and the co-author of the dual award winning Are U Ready?...surviving small business disaster. Anthony is also a Director of The Small Business Institute, a Founder/Director of both Business Success Radio and Transforming Australia and now facilitator/author of Entrepreneurial Heart.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to the following for making my journey of bringing Episode 1 of Entrepreneurial Heart a joyous and inspirational one.

Firstly top our Interviewees for their generosity of time, passion and dedication to their respective causes and their enthusiasm for this project. Without their generous contributions there would be no book.

Akshaya Borkar - The Art & Craft Gallery

Al Jeffery - Realise Flow - top 30 under 30 in 2014

Carly Evans - Coach Carly

Dan Thomas - Image Doctor

Manish Azad - Fitness Freaks

Phil & Janelle Sherrard - Bin Spring

Ryan Ebert - PHW Group - top 30 under 30 in 2016

Shai Wolter - Soul Ardour

Shanley McCray - Opportune Publishing

Shannon Hsu - Q2 Dance

Vanessa Cullen - MoreThanPKD

To Samantha and Chris Crowe for all their work in coming up with the graphics for Entrepreneurial Heart and for transcribing all the interviews.

To Barbara for challenging me to bring MY spirituality front and centre of what I do and lastly, but certainly not least, to Liz for all her support at home over the many hours whilst I recorded interviews and typed this document.





This book is an exploration into spirituality in entrepreneurship and whether this is acknowledged by our entrepreneurs making a difference.

Episode 1 recounts the journeys of our first group of 11 entrepreneurs. Each has a passion and desire to make a difference in the world through empowerment of others.

Their stories are both interesting and inspirational and are revealed with honesty, integrity and a candour that is both refreshing and genuine.

The Author is donating 50% of the purchase price of each e-book to a fund for financing projects that are both entrepreneurial and designed to make real difference.

**ISBN: 978-0-9804857-2-1**

**Further information  
available at...**

[www.EntrepreneurialHeart.com.au](http://www.EntrepreneurialHeart.com.au)

[www.facebook.com/EntHeart](http://www.facebook.com/EntHeart)

## **Entrepreneurial Heart - Episode 1**

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Shanley McCray

Shannon Hsu

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