

# VENUS



Spring 2019

Finding  
equilibrium  
and avoid burnout

Celebrating  
women in  
business

The Venus Awards  
come to London

Style: Sleek and  
chic workwear

How to  
ask for a  
pay rise

SECRETS OF  
THE HIGH  
ACHIEVERS  
How they did it

THE MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS

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**\*Created for  
women  
in business**

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# Rewarding Success

Welcome to our magazine, celebrating women in business and their incredible achievements.

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Women today have far more opportunities than our predecessors. And yet we are far from having equality. Indeed, statistics last year showed that fewer than one in five UK SMEs is run by a woman, and women make up only a third of the country's entrepreneurs.

You'll also find some mind-blowing stats from our reader survey in this magazine and some less surprising ones, with women still taking on the lion's share of family and domestic responsibilities.

But women are achieving great, great things – they are reaching the top of their professions – inspiring countless others in the process, setting up fantastic businesses and launching social initiatives to drive change.

This was widely demonstrated at our London Awards, where the outstanding skills, energy, passion and achievements of the nominees, finalists and winners was highly evident to our panel of judges and sponsors. In this edition you'll discover some inspirational case studies on women in business from the awards, please support them in their ventures and help the Venus network grow.

As an entrepreneur and working mother myself, I set up the Venus Awards to celebrate the achievements of women in business, launching in Dorset in 2009. Since then, the event has expanded to eight regions around the UK, with the 35th ceremony held at the inaugural London Awards at the Waldorf in December last year.

I am very passionate about supporting women in business and tackling the issues that affect us all – from the glass ceiling to the impossible conundrum of work-life balance. By working together and recognising our successes, I believe we can make a huge difference.

*Tara x*



## Inspirational leaders

# Lush co-founder Rowena Bird



We caught up with Rowena to find out her secrets for success...

In 1995 Rowena Bird co-founded Lush, now a global beauty phenomenon with over 900 stores. Its ethical approach has won it legions of fans, with a strong stance against animal testing and an emphasis on natural ingredients. In 2017, her work was recognised with a Venus Award.

### **What advice do you have for someone wanting to start a business?**

It is said if you enjoy what you do you don't work a day. And that is so true. If you see starting a business as something to make ends meet, it is not the way to go. Setting up your own business will cost you way more money and time than you want to spend on it, it will become more important than your social life possibly. Only do something you have a passion for.

### **How do you organise your week?**

My job is not 9 til 5, and because I'm dealing with people in Japan and Australia I'll be doing Skype calls at 8am. So I leave home at 7am as it takes an hour to get to work – which is a long commute for Poole! – and I leave

### **“Live life to the full as you never know when your number is up.”**

work at 6pm. I'm out of the house for 12 hours and if I can't fit what I need into those 12 hours I'm not managing my time correctly. I've stopped taking work home with me and I don't work over weekends. I'm not checking emails all the time.

I want to spend my time when I get home with my husband and I respect that time.



I could sit with my computer on my knee. I could do emails while watching TV. But the business hasn't collapsed because I'm not doing it and at the end of the day it won't make a huge amount of difference to the business but it will make a huge amount of difference to me and my husband. I say, no, you work hard all day, now is time off.

### **How do you create good relationships with people you work with?**

Give them the respect they are due. You have employed someone because they are great and are better than you at something so give them that respect. My job is to support and give vision. Delegation is important and it's crucial that people don't feel they are being watched over and as if you're waiting for them to make a mistake. Ultimately, employ people you like and are better than you at what you want them to do.

### **What mantra do you live by?**

Live life to the full as you never know when your number is up. Make as many memories as you can so should anything happen you have a lot to look back on. You don't want to be thinking if only. Make the most of everything.

### **What do you do with your time off?**

I beach clean. Most days start on the beach and I wander up and down, picking litter if I see it. I also love travelling. I look after the global part of the company and I encourage people on business trips to see the country, take that extra time and feel the culture of where you are so you are not putting English ways into a foreign country when doing business there. I prefer employees to take an extra day and have a little holiday. Work



is demanding but fun and to be at home or in the garden, seeing family, is great. I don't need to be hectic outside of work. But I am hectic on holiday. I can't sit and read a book and drink cocktails.

### **What's next for Lush?**

We have stopped doing five-year plans. We have a rough idea but we are organic in how we grow. We are always looking at new opportunities, what is out there, what our customers are asking of us, what we can be part of and what we need to be aware of. It is never boring. [uk.lush.com](http://uk.lush.com)



Meet the finalists  
and winners of...

# V London Awards

# LONDON AWARDS



Tara Howard

POWERING A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS  
BECOMING MOVEMENT OF CHANGE

Influential Woman, Chelsey Baker, National Mentoring Day, sponsored by Time & Leisure magazine



Company of the Year, Kristen Hazell, London Grace, sponsored by Strategic Growth for Enterprise



# LONDON AWARDS



Top left: PR Excellence, Rebecca Musgrave, Propercorn, sponsored by Sunny Bird PR.



This row: Outstanding CEO, Cally Palmer, The Royal Marsden Hospital.

Director of the Year, Lauren Williams, London Grace.



Inspirational Woman in Tech  
Sophie Thompson, VirtualSpeech  
sponsored by Empact Ventures



2018 Winners

# LONDON AWARDS



Marketing Excellence,  
Tamara Gillan, Cherry London,  
sponsored by Profiles Creative



1. Journalist of the Year,  
Laura Hampson,  
London Evening Standard  
2. Inspirational Woman,  
Secma Flower, Blind Ambition

# LONDON AWARDS



1. HR Professional, Kelly Jackson, WorldFirst, sponsored by Benefex
2. Professional Excellence, Emma Taylor, Rail Safety and Standards Board
3. Social Media Influencer, Jennifer Corcoran, My Super Connector
4. Employer of the Year, Antoinette Daniel, Just Helpers, sponsored by Jaluch
5. Small Business, Katie Young Gerald, Bespoke Textiles, sponsored by BoB
6. Entrepreneur of the Year, Roni Savage, Jomas Associates Ltd



# ST. JAMES'S PLACE ACADEMY



**To celebrate International Women's Day and bring diversity into our industry, the St. James's Place Academy is hosting four events for women to showcase the exciting opportunity we offer - to build a career in financial planning and wealth management as part of a two-year career change programme.**

Our events are being held on the 8th March in London and Manchester, the 27th March in Aberdeen and the 3rd April in Bristol.

No previous experience is required and our role is to assist you in the development of an outstanding career as a qualified wealth advice professional, working with St. James's Place Wealth Management - an award-winning FTSE100 company. We have four Academy locations across the UK: London, Solihull, Manchester and Edinburgh.

**If you're interested and would like to know more about our events or the programme, please contact Brigitte Baker, Academy Attraction Manager on 07789 876901 or email [Brigitte.baker@sjp.co.uk](mailto:Brigitte.baker@sjp.co.uk).**

By Lucy Kane

# Writing your own narrative

All too often, women's narratives have been written for them: defining women's places in history (or not), instructing how we should look and how we should act as a female.

The new wave of female business owners and women in business are changing that and writing their own narrative, and refreshingly it does not always subscribe to the successful stereotypes that appeal to the male agenda.

Storytelling is an ancient art, we tell stories to our friends, at home with our families as ways to connect with people, to make them laugh and remember us. Stories are beautiful things and are a part of how we grow and learn about ourselves. So writing your own narrative is an extension of this. It's time to be your own hype-woman, be the person you want to be.



With the rise of content creation and personal brand development, 'being the best you' brings with it the pressures of self-promotion, being extrovert and confident in your brand, honing great journalistic skills and being able to take, source and post a damn good photo. Plus finding the time for all this on top of the day job.

Here are my top tips for creating the 'best you'

1. Brainstorm your personal brand, your values, interests, your unique selling points (USPs), define your voice.
2. Target your audience. Identify who they are by profiling your customers. This may be just one profile or up to five. Research where they 'live' on media and a variety of channels to reach these profiles.
3. Plan your campaign out over a period of weeks or months and include all the different channels you want to use to promote yourself on. There is some great free project planning software you can get online.
4. There are lots of free tools to enable you to find professional images and create cool and contemporary designs and posts.
5. Tell your story and don't worry if you're not always promoting your brand or service if it helps support your narrative.
5. Build in call to actions but make sure it is a natural fit to your content and offers a great benefit to the reader.
7. Build a network of support. When you have a marketing budget, outsource the things you find most challenging to a team who understand 'brand you'.

**In this edition, we've engaged with five successful Venus. They're sharing their stories with us in their own words, so we hope you enjoy them and support them in their journey.**



**Lucy Kane has been marketing businesses and publishing magazines for 21 years. Time & Leisure creates engaging content written by journalists, shot by photographers, styled by designers, promoted by sales and marketing experts. If you'd like any further advice contact Lucy for more details. 020 8545 6777**

# Hope and charity

## Give as you Live: bringing innovation to fundraising

### Tell us about your journey at Give as you Live so far...

I have worked for Give as you Live for over 10 years, helping to bring the company's vision of setting the industry standard for innovative charity fundraising in the UK to life. Specialising in charity and corporate partnerships, I believe that the third sector should have unrestricted revenue streams so that all of the UK's charities are able to thrive and survive. With my guidance and dedication, Give as you Live has raised almost £10m for charity and brought new innovations to help people raise even more.

### Can you tell us about your vision for the year ahead?

2019 is set to be an exciting year for Give as you Live. With two brand new product launches being released, the vision is to raise over a £1million in free funds for UK charities. These two products include; a fundraising platform, allowing users to set up bespoke fundraising pages and collect donations and a luxury high street shopping fundraising initiative, allowing high-net worth individuals to generate funds through their purchases.

### What advice would you give to aspiring business women?

To stay focussed and remain true to yourself and what you believe in. It sounds cliché but it's a mantra that I have stuck to throughout my career. There will often be tough times in any business,



but it is these times that shape and develop your abilities to deal with a variety of situations. You must also have fun, workloads can often be heavy but remember to balance this with personal time and you will find your productivity will flourish.

**Annabelle Risdon**  
**Director and Head of Partnerships**  
**Find out more about Give as you Live**  
[www.give.as.Venus](http://www.give.as.Venus)

# Empowering entrepreneurs

## Championing rights with innovation and inspiration

### **Dr Gonzalez, tell us about your background and experience and why Latina Mastermind?**

I always begin my story with the fact that I was conceived in Cuba, born in Spain and proudly made in the USA. My family taught me the value of an education and to serve and give back despite circumstances. Those are still two of the core values that drive every fibre of who I am. I have dedicated my life to be of service through the field of psychology not only as a psychologist but taking those skills and expanding to coach others to reconnect with their purpose and themselves. Latina Mastermind came from that same desire to serve and give back. It was driven from a desire to fill a need that exists in the Latina community around the world. To have a place where a Latina can develop leadership skills and unleash the sleeping giant within.

### **What do you enjoy most about what you do?**

What drives me, what gives me passion is changing lives and supporting those women and men that seek to change their lives and unlock their purpose and destiny. Watching others implement my systems, theories and techniques to their own individual lives and seeing how their manifestations of their lives transform in front of their eyes is amazing. It is the fuel that keeps me doing what I do.

### **Who has been the biggest influence on your career?**

My family; most particularly my mother, my aunt



and uncle. They gave up everything to give me everything. They gave up selflessly to allow me to have the opportunity to give back to the world. My mother is a constant source of support and inspiration and gently, and not so gently other times, reminds me to maintain my path of why I am here and that my gifts are meant to be shared with the world.

### **What are you hoping to achieve in the future?**

What am I not hoping to achieve is a better question. We currently have many projects underway including the Women's Leadership Development Network. A year long leadership program for Latinas and our signature programme The Year of YOUTM, that will launch in the second quarter of this year for all women.

**Dr. Isaura Gonzalez**

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# Accelerate Your Growth

S.G.F.E. (Strategic Growth for Enterprise) is unique in the SME coaching world. We offer entrepreneurs the kind of help that is normally only available to larger businesses. Our blend of coaching, training and consultancy is in the 'do it with you' space, so is affordable to smaller businesses. As sponsors of The Venus Awards, we appreciate and celebrate the contribution that women make to business.

S.G.F.E. is here to help you grow your business. We know that everyone gets stuck at certain stages of growth and more importantly we know why and how to get you unstuck. So if you want to accelerate your business growth, get in touch. We are here to help.



Strategic Growth  
for Enterprise

01733 293760 | [www.sgfe.co.uk](http://www.sgfe.co.uk)

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A woman with short brown hair is standing in a studio setting. She is wearing a light pink suit consisting of a blazer and trousers, over a white zip-up top. She is also wearing black sandals. The background is a plain grey wall, and there is a large, textured, light-colored panel on the left side of the frame.

FASHION

# New season in style

Gorgeous workwear for  
SS19 that looks both  
stylish and professional...

Who says you can't clash patterns? This is the perfect spring/summer look with a chic and practical trench over a versatile shirt dress.

**Oasis Polka Dot Shirt Dress £50,  
Warehouse Checked Trench  
Coat £110, Monsoon Sandal £55,  
Littlewoods**



Pastels are everywhere right now. Proving that the trend can translate to the office, we are seeing some gorgeous tailored looks.

**Monsoon Alejandra Co-Ord Suit, £125  
Previous page: French Connection  
Sundae Suiting Pastel Suit Jacket, £140,  
trousers £80**

Simple styling and ultra-flattering, team a classic suit with statement shoes to complete the look.

**Wallis: Blazer £42, Khaki Vest £28, Trousers £35, Heels £45**



As temperatures soared last summer, what to wear in the workplace became a minefield. Short suits could be the answer with a smart jacket to throw on for meetings.

**Miss Selfridge Stone Linen Double Breasted Blazer £55, Stone Linen Tailored Short £32**

It is a trend that is dividing opinion but we think the boilersuit could well make the transition to smart workwear – and saves precious time on having to co-ordinate separates!

**Miss Selfridge Neutral Utility Boiler Suit £49**





By Tara Howard

# Asking for a pay rise

With recent statistics on the gender pay gap revealing 8 in 10 UK firms\* are paying men a higher salary, there is no denying that the issue of women's subordinate salaries need addressing.

Today's working women are being pulled in all directions and often don't have the confidence to ask for the pay they feel they deserve.

We are urging employers to really look at how they recognise and reward women, and whether they are giving women a fair chance when it comes to pay reviews.

The Venus Awards' recent 'Working Women' survey of over 2,000 women revealed that almost half (47%) of women have never asked for a pay rise.

In response to this, we have pulled together our top tips on how to ask for a pay rise (and be successful) with the help of Sarah England, partner and specialist in Employment Law at Gales Solicitors.

## 1. Do your research

Your contract should clearly state if you have specific rights to salary increases or reviews. If not, then you'll need to consider your realistic salary requirement. Make sure you attend your pay review clued up on what you are entitled to and ask for it. Be prepared to walk away if you don't get the pay rise you want but bear in mind the benefits you already receive. What are they worth to you and would you get them at another job? It might be that your employer is super flexible about annual leave and that could be worth a lot more to you than a salary increase.

## 2. Be realistic

We'd all like a superstar salary but aiming too high can put your employer off. Approach the meeting as a conversation rather than seeing it as a flat 'yes' or 'no' question. By doing this, you will gain a better understanding of what your employer thinks about your capabilities and will then be able to 'pitch' more appropriately, giving you a much better chance of achieving your goal.

## 3. Be confident

All too often, women feel that they can't stand up and ask for what they want, but that shouldn't be the case. Be confident in your own abilities and outline to your employer exactly why you deserve a pay rise. What great achievements have you made recently? How have you gone above and beyond your job description? Take along the job



description of your current role and compare it to the role above in your review. This way, you can talk through your duties in black and white and demonstrate your worth.

## 4. Be positive

Try to avoid emotional or subjective language such as 'I want' or 'I need.' Instead, let your achievements speak for you and do not issue any ultimatums that you're unprepared to follow through with.

## 5. Listen to the answer

If your boss says no to a pay rise, be polite and ask for feedback. You can always approach your boss again. Ask for a plan to be put in place for six months' time with a set of clear objectives on the understanding that once you meet those objectives then a further pay review can be organised. This shows your employer that you're serious and gives you clear guidelines, which removes any ambiguity or room for misinterpretation in future reviews.

# 43%

**Pay is still not always equal for equal work, but still taboo:**

43% said they didn't know if their male colleagues were being paid more or less, suggesting transparency in pay is still lacking.

# 42%

42% of women feel they have been disadvantaged in the workplace due to their gender.

\*The Working Women's Survey, carried out by the organisers of the Venus Awards, is the largest survey to date carried out by the group with over 2,400 women responding to the survey.



Dr Anna Kane

# In confidence

What do you do when your confidence lets you down at work?



Someone once said to me that confidence is a bit like common sense, we all have it to a degree and know what it is, yet it can be quite elusive.

Everyone has times when their confidence lets them down. Even the most confident among us has spoken at meetings or presentations when we really wish the floor would just open up. That said, I know people who love speaking to an audience of hundreds, yet have no confidence giving feedback to a team member. Confidence is all relative. Furthermore, women tend to face different challenges when it comes to confidence than men do.

So with this in mind, how can we learn to not let crises in confidence hold us back? Try exploring some of my suggestions to see what works for you.

## **Understand yourself better**

Daniel Goleman, a leading researcher in emotional intelligence tells us that self-awareness makes us better, more confident leaders. This requires knowing our strengths and limitations. Try asking your colleagues what you're good at and not so good at, but you have to be prepared to fully listen if you ask! You could also try writing a journal or taking up a contemplative practice such as mindfulness.

## Know your values

Knowing what your personal and work values are can provide you with a clear sense of direction when difficult times arrive. If you don't take the time to clearly establish what your values are, you can be left like a rudderless boat when a storm arrives.

For some people their personal and work values may be the same thing, especially if you are an SME business owner. For others, there may be a perfectly clear delineation. Remember this is about you, not some ideal person you've never met!

Confidence is often viewed as a thought. The eminent psychologist Bandura described it as believing in one's own ability to produce desired results. However, have you also considered how confidence can stem from the mind-physical connection? Has your voice ever let you down just at that moment when you wanted to speak? If so, learning some voice exercises can help you overcome such moments. What you eat and drink can influence how you feel about yourself. You may notice that after some meals your brain is foggy. If so, try keeping a food diary. Find the foods that alleviate your performance and those that drag it down. There are other forms of body confidence but these should get you started.

When it comes to gender, bear in mind that research shows that where no significant gender difference in ability exists, women are more self-critical than men and more likely to underestimate their own workplace performance. Men, on the other hand, show more confidence and overconfidence.

People ask me for my top piece of advice on how to overcome those horrible confidence knocking moments. I always encourage moments of kindness to self, avoid beating yourself up, and look for the silver lining. Someone recently recounted to me about falling to pieces at a presentation for a new contract. I could see they cared passionately about what they do and suggested that others will see that too. I encouraged them to let go of the negative self-talk and to look for the learning in order that the next presentation can build on that experience, not become an unhelpful frustrating repeat of it.

**Anna Kane is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist and a Registered Coaching Psychologist. Get in touch at [anna@workpsychologyhub.co.uk](mailto:anna@workpsychologyhub.co.uk) or on 07582 440668. She offers free 30 minute coaching sessions for individuals.**



**Dawn Crossingham - MD**

## Do you have Big Dreams?

If you have big dreams, combined with unlimited enthusiasm and the drive to 'make-it-happen' then we can support you by enabling you to become a bigger entity on the local, national and international scene.

"I wish I'd met you 5yrs ago Dawn. I've wasted endless time & money on other consultants. Finally, someone who knows how to run a business and get to the nub of issues with no messing about. Effective, timely and GREAT value for money. Thankyou"

**AG - Bournemouth**

## We Believe

that every business is unique and deserves the opportunity to optimise their potential.

Think of us as your operational director providing the type of realistic solutions to enable you to GROW. We believe that the future of our economy is held in the hands of businesses owned by people like YOU.

### We Know

that OUR tried and tested methods combined with YOUR experience are the perfect combination for business success.

### We Aim

to inspire, enthuse, respond, rectify, resolve and support our clients.

### Our Promise

is to deliver a high quality service combined with integrity and passion for businesses who want to exceed their potential.

Ensuring the Growth and Development of your Business

# D52 Business Toolkit

# We Have the Solution

[www.D52ltd.com](http://www.D52ltd.com)

# MIND MATTERS

## Giving mental health a voice

### **Sandra, why MindBerry... how did this journey start?**

During my clinical training as integrative psychotherapist, I came across a lot of people who complained about limited, or were denied access to, proper mental health services. At MindBerry we want to increase the awareness of mental well-being and build a secure online platform that makes mental health services more accessible and affordable. I personally had a traumatic experience as a teenager, when my father had a heart attack in our garden. Counselling or even talking about mental health didn't exist at the time and there was a massive stigma around it. I wished a service like MindBerry had have been around at that time to process my traumatic experience with someone. My aim is to destigmatise mental well-being as it is as important as physical health.

### **Who benefits from your services**

There are a great number of people that can benefit from our tailored services, for example, schools & universities, businesses and their employees, veterans and everyone who is going through a difficult time in their lives. We want to enrich people's lives and help them wherever we can.

### **What do you enjoy most about your role?**

Since the day MindBerry was founded, it has been a very demanding role that requires a high level of attention, motivation and flexibility. This is my first business so it's a fascinating learning curve for me. My most enjoyable role is making a difference in people's lives when they are having counselling with me.



### **Where do you plan to take the business in the future?**

MindBerry will start out in the UK but we have plans to scale our business, making it accessible to more people around the globe. We would like to establish more partnerships with businesses, institutions and charities to deliver better mental health services. Technology is indispensable for our business and we have plans to incorporate more features to increase the effectiveness of online counselling.

**Sandra de Monte**  
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## CHARITY WORK

### Utilising tech for the greater good

#### **Tia, how did you get involved in the Venus Awards and what was your experience like?**

I got involved in the Venus Awards when I had just launched whatCharity.com in the UK. A business partner company suggested that I apply as they knew about my long history of supporting women and the history of whatCharity, which also promotes women doing good together. When nominated as a finalist in the Women in Tech category, I had a chance to meet so many amazing women and companies which helped me grow my network and spread the whatCharity message.

#### **What do you most enjoy about your role in your business?**

Although we are a platform business, we are very hands on when it comes to creating helpful content for our users, developing new features with our users and matching companies and charities through our public campaigns. I am always delighted when I hear stories from charities, donors, volunteers and companies on how whatCharity.com has helped them to find each other and what they have subsequently achieved together.

#### **Who has been your biggest influence?**

My role models are charities and individuals who have the passion to make a difference and are dedicated to making our society better. The commitment I have witnessed keeps me grounded to my calling and inspires me. My purpose is to harness my business skills and tech to help these champions on the 'front line' to do their thing more effectively.



#### **What are your plans for the next five years within the business?**

whatCharity.com will become the 'LinkedIn' for the charity sector and scale internationally. Our current platform is only a fraction of what we aim to become. We will use AI to matchmake the public offers with charity requests – there is no other service in the world that does this.

#### **What are the next steps?**

whatCharity will launch new platform features to the public in April / May 2019. We're also helping several companies run their community engagement projects with our company tool [www.whatcharityforcompanies.com](http://www.whatcharityforcompanies.com).

We work with all different sizes and types of companies to help them contribute to their close communities and I wish to invite all readers and companies they represent to join! Companies can donate skills, services, products, money and more through the campaigns and help charities shortlisted in their campaigns to gain awareness. Easy, efficient and fun!

**Contact:** [tia@whatcharity.com](mailto:tia@whatcharity.com)

**What is whatCharity.com video:**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_VOJjDxMXs8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VOJjDxMXs8)

# Understanding the individual

Prioritising business by looking at what motivates people in the world of work



I was fortunate to have, very early on in my career, a manager who had a reputation for truly understanding what motivated individuals and helping them to recognise where they derived enjoyment and purpose in what they do. This ultimately led me towards a path within HR, because I understood that helping to create an environment, which inspires people to be at their best, connected me to the business in a way no other function could.

I joined WorldFirst because I was inspired by the vision and ambition of our CEO and those I met during my interview process. WorldFirst and our new parent company, Ant Financial, share a similar vision to democratise financial services and I have loved this sense of ambition and purpose ever since, because it creates genuine opportunities to push forward and not be constrained by existing ways of doing things.

This enthusiasm, by my team and I, for challenging the status quo is what I feel led to the recognition by Benefex and ultimately winning the Venus Award. It is easy to get caught up in your daily business, thinking that other companies are doing the same thing as you, only better. However, when you reflect for a moment, having an ethos that strives for tackling taboos creates room for everyone to have a sense of belonging. Genuinely caring for employees really does make a difference to the bottom line, and certainly makes a more fun place to work!

**Kelly Jackson**  
Chief People Officer  
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# Finding equilibrium

Cara de Lange, international wellbeing mentor, coach and speaker, offers five simple and easy ways to prevent burnout and find more balance in your life...



## **Know your strategy to de-escalate stress**

Feeling stressed is part of life. Knowing what you will do in a moment of stress is key to calming you down. Write down what you will do when stressed and keep it close to you so you remember.

It can be, for example: take 10 deep breaths, call a friend or family member, close your eyes and look at the big picture, take a relaxing walk.

## **Learn to stand still on the hamster wheel**

Do you ever feel you are on a hamster wheel and can't stop running?

Often, we are led to believe that success depends on our ability to accomplish more in less time and if we are not 'pushing' ourselves then we're not going to get where we want. No wonder so many people feel stressed when they can't keep up or get ahead. What if you actually start on the hamster wheel with the intention of simply 'being' and

you put your trust in the fact that wherever you are in its cycle is exactly where you need to be. You could slow down to a more natural rhythm, whether this means you are walking, jogging or standing absolutely, completely still. Static. Nothing would really happen, right?

Stand still on that hamster wheel! Take time to 'be'. Sit down on the sofa and look out of the window - for hours if you need to. Daydream. Breathe. Do nothing. Take the time to check in with what it is you really need right now.

### **Meditate**

Meditate every day – this can be your preventative medicine!

Meditation and breathing can help reduce stress and uplift your mood. Meditation and breathing can increase lung capacity and help the body receive more oxygen. Meditation can help to settle our mind and calm us so we can focus on what we're doing. We gain awareness of what is in our minds and we can identify our negative thoughts. It is healthy to realise that our thoughts are not who we are. This will help us become less identified with our negative thoughts so they start to lose their power. Meditation can also help you cultivate compassion for yourself and other people. There are many other benefits to meditation that you will discover when you try it for yourself.

### **Have a brave conversation**

Think about something that is stressing you. Now think about who you need to

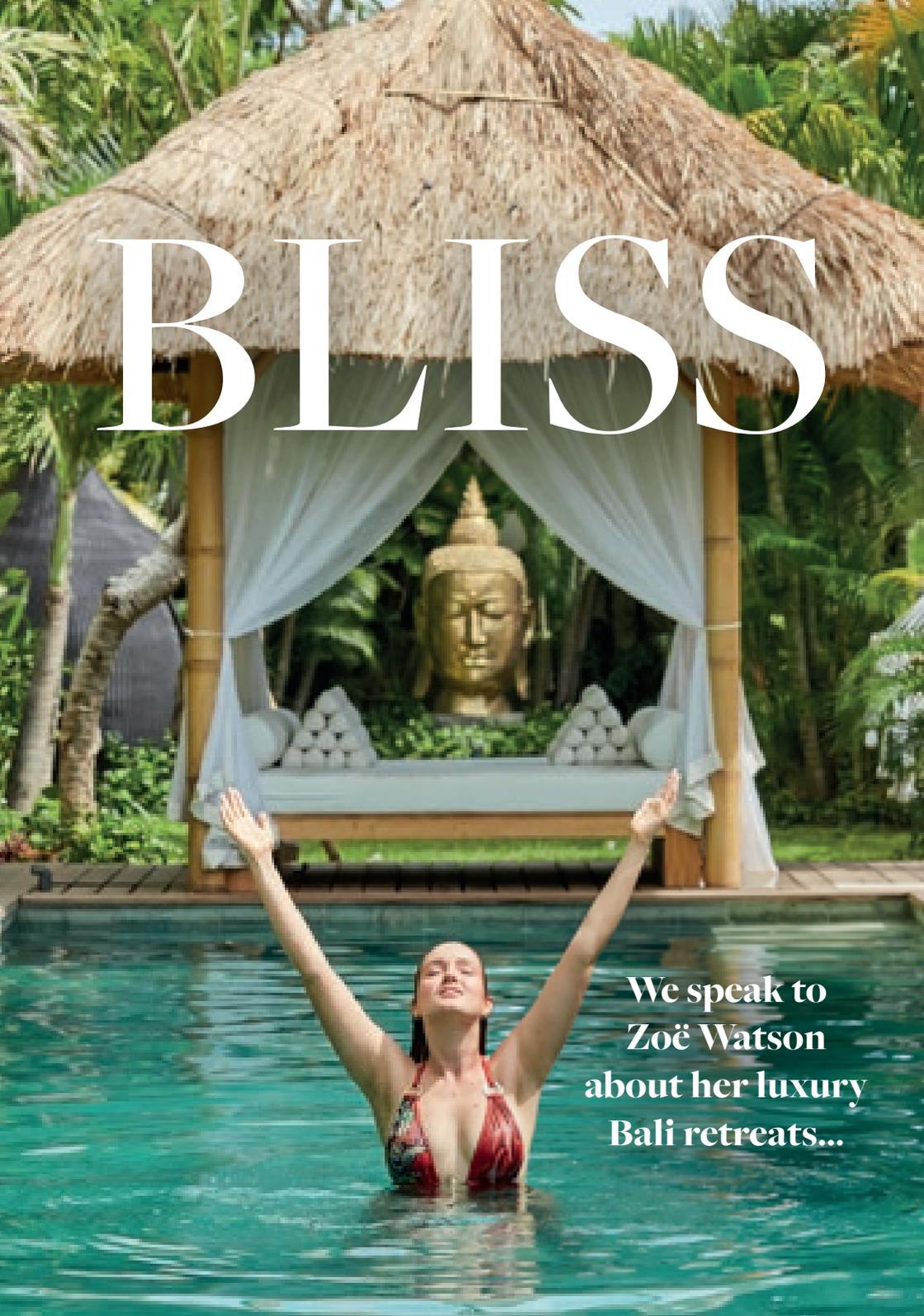


talk to and decrease the stress (is it to your boss to reduce workload? or to a colleague to get them to help you out). Often stress can be caused by conversations not yet had or our own stories about how they will go. Think about the person you want to have the conversation with. Visualise it and see it going really well.

### **Live as joyfully as you can**

I hear you. How do I find joy in my life if everything is going wrong and I am so busy and stressed? Here is the good news! You can! Just by taking time to be (slow down on that hamster wheel!) and notice what is going on around you. Do more of the things you love. What makes your heart sing? For me it can be a sunny day, feeling loved and being able to help others. But here is the trick, don't force it. Slow down and see what happens and where you can find more joy.

Cara's new book offers many more tips of how to prevent burnout and be more peaceful. You can pre-order it online at: [www.softersuccess.com](http://www.softersuccess.com) or contact her directly [cara@softersuccess.com](mailto:cara@softersuccess.com) She also offers an online training programme.



# BLISS

**We speak to  
Zoë Watson  
about her luxury  
Bali retreats...**



**Lots of people go on holiday and wish they didn't have to come home, but you fell in love with Bali to the point of quitting your job and starting a new business from scratch. What triggered the idea?**

I'd been involved in a car accident in Adelaide in 2007 that left me with chronic migraines and fatigue and I was juggling a stressful job in media sales. I just got to breaking point, and needed to take time out and reassess where I was going with my life. I went on holiday to Bali and fell in love with the place, but I hadn't found exactly what I'd been looking for in a spa. Most are marketed to groups of women rather than a woman travelling on her own. I was utterly exhausted and just needed to relax, but all I could find were yoga and health retreats – places that put the focus on self-improvement. I wanted warmth, a beautiful pool, fantastic food, peace and quiet, and space from my life to

think and reconnect. What I didn't want was a task list, regimented itinerary or a detox.

**So you decided to create your own retreat – that's pretty ambitious**

True, but I knew I could do it. My background is in marketing and media, so I just started writing the content of a website, mapped it out, looked up all the things you can do in Bali online and created experiences I thought women might like. A friend helped me create a logo and put the website together, and another photographer friend let me use her images of the island. I learnt about SEO, put a sales sheet together, did a marketing plan and business plan and then I quit my media job giving four months' notice – with the condition that I could go to Bali for a fortnight in-between to find a villa and furnish it. I found the right place within two days, and went furniture shopping in



the local markets. I was able to finance the business with an insurance payout from the car accident, so it all just fell into place.

### **What makes Bliss different from other retreats?**

Bliss Sanctuary For Women combines the elements of a spa holiday with whatever our guests want to do, when they want to do it. We offer unlimited yoga and unlimited massages – having a massage under a blue sky surrounded by beautiful gardens is hard to beat – and all meals are included in the price, so there are no surprise bills at the end of your stay. We run yoga sessions, but you don't have to go if you'd rather have a lie-in or sunbathe by the pool. Life is for living and enjoying, not being told what to do and how to do it – especially when you're on holiday. We offer an amazing safe space with wonderful staff and give our customers the freedom to do whatever they want. It's purely self-indulgent and I don't know a single woman who doesn't deserve to take

time out from their schedule, give themselves some valuable 'me time' and just do exactly as they please.

We now have three luxurious five-bedroom sanctuaries, with our third opening in the gorgeous tropical rainforest of Ubud in April 2019. We were busy from day one and turned a profit within the first three months, which was amazing.

### **You make it sound simple, but the legalities of setting up a business in Indonesia can't have been easy**

I actually opened up the business offshore as in Indonesia you can't start a business without an Indonesian person owning it with you, and I wanted to expand beyond Bali in the longer-term. Our Balinese operations are run through an Indonesian management company and I've also opened a finance business in Australia, where I'm from, as banking is a lot cheaper – plus I'm working with multiple currencies.

**You're back in Australia now – it must be difficult to hand over the day-to-day management of a business you've grown from scratch?**

It was difficult at first, but a year ago I switched to all Indonesian staff and hostesses and it's the best thing I have ever done. They genuinely care for our guests and want to show off their beautiful island and I pay them above the normal rate for their work. I was so proud of all my staff when Bliss won Best Luxury Wellness Villa at The World Luxury Hotel Awards in 2017 and 2018. We also have incredible feedback on TripAdvisor, so that shows we're getting it right.

**Do you actually get time to treat yourself to a break in your own sanctuary?**

No, because it becomes work for me. I'm checking everything out, coming up with

new ideas and I never relax. That's what happens when you make other people's pleasure your business! Instead I have one massage a week, which does wonders for my body.

**What are you like to work for?  
Be honest!**

I know I'm demanding and I have very high expectations. I'm also direct and to the point. If there's a problem, as long as people are honest and ask for help, I'm happy. I like to think I'm kind, but I don't suffer fools gladly. I wouldn't be where I am today if I did!

Find out more at  
[www.blissanctuaryforwomen.com](http://www.blissanctuaryforwomen.com)  
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# 68%

68% of women said if their children were ill or needed childcare for another unplanned reason it would be themselves providing it rather than a partner.

# 39%

39% of entrepreneurs said they find they are working longer hours than when they were employed.

\*The Working Women's Survey, carried out by the organisers of the Venus Awards, is the largest survey to date carried out by the group with over 2,400 women responding to the survey.

## TV presenter Alexis Bowater



Alexis Bowater is a familiar face to many as a television journalist and presenter with a long career as a news anchor on ITV Westcountry and presenting features on BBC's Inside Out, Britain on the Move and the People's Millions campaign. An award-winning journalist, it may seem from the outside looking in that Alexis' career has been plain sailing, but that hasn't always been the case.

"I always wanted to be a reporter and journalist," Alexis says of her childhood ambitions, "my instinct was to be a campaigning journalist, but it was tough.

"I started off working in a newspaper newsroom in a very male-dominated profession in a time when journalism wasn't considered to be a suitable career for women," Alexis comments. "When I was a teenager a careers advisor had told me that I would never be a news reporter or work in a newsroom; that it was a job for

boys. It took me a long time to learn that I was just as capable as anyone else.

"In the early days of my career, not long out of the 1980s, to be considered equal to your male counterparts you had to behave and dress as a man. I wore suits and brogues and changed my mannerisms and behaviour to fit that of the men I was surrounded with: to be 'one of the boys'. It was at the height of 'lad culture'."

**"It took me 30 years to realise that I do not have to be a boy, to be a girl"**

It took Alexis a long time to realise that being a feminist didn't mean dressing and behaving like a boy. "When I discovered the Venus Awards they were an absolute revelation for me. I've always been a feminist and have always been very feminine, but I didn't realise

that you can be both: and a businesswoman too. The Venus Awards showed me that there was still an opportunity and a gap for authenticity and to embrace the fact that I am a feminine feminist.”

Overcoming the obstacles against women in journalism is not the only challenge Alexis has faced in her career. Whilst pregnant in 2006 and 2008 she was cyber-stalked, which included threats to her and her unborn child’s safety. She says: “when somebody is telling you they’re going to do all these things you believe them and you live with it every day and night. Towards the end, just before they caught him, when the email came in saying that I was going to be found hanged, that’s when I - and I believe the police too - thought it was a race against time between them getting him, and him getting me.”

After her stalker was jailed, Alexis campaigned heavily to help other women going through these harrowing experiences. Her work helped to lead to the introduction of a specific stalking offence in the law in 2012 that gave prosecutors stronger powers to deal with these incidents.

Recently Alexis has been supporting Sarah Wollaston MP for Totnes on the new Stalking Protection Orders that passed Committee Stage in the House of Commons. “Introduction of legislation like this sends out a clear message to stalkers that they can’t get away with this behaviour.

“I hope that this helps victims know that there are people out there working to support and help them. The biggest problem with stalking is the impact it has on victims who feel trapped, isolated and silenced in a horrific situation of fear.

“The more we talk about this and the more that we talk about the measures that are out there to help combat this, the better. One in five women will be stalked at some point in their lives. Most wait until over 100 incidences have occurred before reporting it. I hope that these measures give them the confidence to know that there are robust laws that can help them get the help that they deserve.”

Since her experiences, Alexis has become an extremely prominent member in the community, supporting others who have gone through similar issues. She is now a regional partner for the Venus Awards, described by Channel 4 as ‘the working women’s Oscars’, that aim to recognise and celebrate other working women who have overcome obstacles in their careers.

Alexis has valuable advice for the careerwomen of the future: “If there’s one gift I could give every single girl growing up today who is looking to go into business, then it is the knowledge that it took me 30 years to learn: you do not have to be a boy, to be a girl.”

**Alexis Bowater is the founder of Bowater Communications**

# The business

## [directory]

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[www.bbxuk.com](http://www.bbxuk.com)

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## WeWork

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# time & leisure

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