

A Collection OF

SHORT INSPIRATIONAL INTERVIEWS

WITH **TRAILBLAZING**

WOMEN

ENTREPRENEURS

About the Interviewer

About:

Name: **Ahana Kotibhaskar**

Business Sector: **Clothing**

Brand name: **Saathi**

Start Date: **August 2022**

Nationality: **Indian**

Education: **Reading for A-Level**

School: **Wycombe Abbey School**



As a 16-year-old entrepreneur who founded a small business called "Saathi", a business about reusable menstrual underwear with the motto Buy 1 to Give 1, my aim is to eradicate period poverty in a sustainable way.

Having made an effort to launch my firm, I have witnessed the challenges and triumphs of establishing and operating a business. In the early stages of building Saathi, I found myself seeking guidance and advice from those who had walked the path before me. As I learned more about business, I wanted to share my experiences with every budding entrepreneur who might decide to walk the walk. Because of this very reason, I embarked on the quest to interview eight incredible women who have achieved great success in their business.

Through these short inspirational interviews, I aim to uncover the unique challenges they encountered, the strategies they used, and the lessons they learned along the way to success. While I know that these conversations have not only shaped the course of my own business but will also assist and guide innumerable budding entrepreneurs by inspiring and empowering them on their journey.

FOREWORD

In a world where tales of male pioneers often dominate the narrative of entrepreneurship, it's refreshing to delve into the stories of extraordinary women who have fearlessly carved their paths in the business world. This small collection introduces us to eight incredible women who have extraordinary achievements as entrepreneurs and whose lives are examples of resilience, innovation and unwavering determination.

These trailblazers, each with their own unique history and vision, invite us into their world as we embark on this journey through the pages ahead. Their success stories, which range from ground-breaking startups to well-established businesses, are a testament to their willpower, creativity and sheer grit.

These women stand out not only due to their ability to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship but also because of their dedication to breaking down barriers and opening doors for future generations of women in entrepreneurship. Through their experiences, they provide priceless knowledge, inspiration, and lessons for aspiring entrepreneurs worldwide.

These women are not just business leaders in the industry; they are also change-makers, progressive catalysts and beacons of hope for a future that can be more equitable and inclusive.

In celebrating their achievements, we celebrate the power of resilience, the beauty of diversity and the boundless potential of the human spirit. It is my sincere hope that every story will ignite a spark within each reader, as it did with me, inspiring them to pursue their dreams with unwavering courage and persistence.

Without further ado, I invite you to join me on this enlightening journey - to be inspired and driven while you learn about the extraordinary life stories of eight incredible women entrepreneurs who are changing the definition of success in the business world.

Let their voices be heard, their stories be told, and their legacies cherished.

With my very best wishes, I hope you enjoy the reading,

Ahana

OUR 8 TRAILBLAZERS

*Kainaz
Messman
Harchandrai*



*Kim (Brown)
Morrish*



*Samara
Punjabi*



Lucy Bruce



Maggie Amin



Reema Ameer



*Sapna
Kewalramani
Malhotra*



*Heather
Kelton*



TRAILBLAZER 1

About:

Name: **Kainaz Messman Harchandrai**

Business Sector: **Food**

Brand name: **Theobroma, Food of the Gods**

Start Date: **October 2004**

Nationality: **Indian**

Education: **Diploma in Hotel Management**

Work Experience: **Oberoi Group of Hotels, India**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

I am a pastry chef; I co-founded Theobroma which is a cake and pastry business in India. We have 200 outlets across 20 cities. www.theobroma.in

2. What inspired you to start your business?

I grew up in a sweet-smelling home. My mum ran a cake business from home and my dad ran his own pharmaceutical business. I grew up helping make cakes and rolling chocolates. I trained as a chef but wanted to bring cakes and pastries to the high street and make it accessible to all.

3. How has your business developed since its launch?

What strategies did you use to develop it?

I started with a good product. As we grew, we maintained focus on our product. We are obsessive about product quality. We make every product ourselves (except some beverages), and we make it with good ingredients and care and love.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

I am content and happy, that is my definition of success. Success is not the turnover of my company, the number of outlets, or such. I love what I do, I earn a living from it, my product is loved and enjoyed, and herein lies my success.

5. What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company?

The ability to make people happy. Spreading joy and happiness is a pleasure in itself. I am most grateful for the business we have built and the incredible people that have helped us get here.

6. What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

Grit and a desire to keep learning. Not giving up when times are hard (and there will be those) requires strength. Perseverance to keep improving yourself, your product, your company.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

Growing the business without losing the essence of what made us successful in the first place. It is easy to become complacent once a name becomes a brand. Maintaining quality has always been my focus and remains our priority.

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

My family has helped build the business with me. My friends have cleaned tables, packed hampers, served our guests. My girlfriends have cheered me on and picked me up off the floor. I will forever be thankful for the love and support of my near and dear, but also for strangers who walked through our doors and evolved into friends.

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

I have been incredibly lucky, and for that I am most grateful. I was able to start a business and create a career for myself. I had to earn the respect of my team, I had to prove myself many times over. I was lucky to get great publicity and media coverage especially in our early years. I have never wondered if something happening to me or my business is because I am a woman, they are merely the opportunities or challenges of that day.

10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?

Work life balance. It is impossible to have it all, do it all: it is not realistic. On some days, my business needs me, at other times my family gets my full attention. There is a balance to be found, a balance that works for you, one cannot give their 100% to everything all the time.

11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

Living a life that is not very different from the one I have today. I want to be making and enjoying good food, exercising and being active, spending time with family and friends. I have a good life which I am very grateful for, and I hope it stays just so.

12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?

As we started growing, we struggled to evolve from a family run business to a professionally managed company. In the early years, we recruited quantity over quality. I personally had to evolve from being a demanding boss into an inspiring, encouraging, and empathetic leader. We have had to continually evaluate ourselves and identify how and where we could do better.

13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?

There has been a huge increase in the number of women willing to work in kitchens. Families are more accepting of their daughters wanting to build careers for themselves. Businesses have also become better at recruiting and retaining female employees.

14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?

We need good people at the top, it does not matter if they are women or not. Women need equal and fair opportunities, and then it is for them to determine whether they wish to be at the top. Women and men must learn to work together, to share the workplace, to not only coexist but also thrive and grow together. As a company, we provide a safe environment and opportunities for women at all levels, their contributions are valuable in all positions and not only at the top.

15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?

I work at it every day. Some days I get it right, and on some I could do better. I work around my family commitments as far as possible, sometimes my family fits around my work. It is a work in progress.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

Start a business for the right reasons, be willing to work very hard, build a good team. Share the success, take responsibility for the mistakes. This is my advice to anyone building a business, boy or girl.

Notes:

For more details on how we built and grew Theobroma, please read our book 'Baking a Dream; The Theobroma Story'.

Baking a Dream; The Theobroma Story

A memoir by Kainaz Messman Harchandrai.

<https://www.amazon.in/dp/9353573580>

<https://amzn.to/3gi8q29>

TRAILBLAZER 2

About:

Name: **Kim (Brown) Morrish**

Business Sector: **External Maintenance Business and Biodiversity Expert**

Brand name: **Ground Control Limited**

Start Date: **2004**

Nationality: **British**

Undergrad: **University of Cambridge**

Post Grad: **University of Virginia, Darden School**

Work Experience: **USAID, 3 Start-ups, NED, Impact Investor**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

I led the search for and acquisition of Ground Control Ltd in 2004. My focus was on strategy, business development, culture and people. With my team, we've grown an £8 million regional grounds maintenance business into a national, multi-disciplinary £200 million firm.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

I wanted to work for myself. After working in or leading three start-ups, a business acquisition was more aligned with my life.

3. How has your business developed since its launch? What strategies did you use to develop it?

Focus on attracting the very best people around the values we hold, building a strong culture, delighting our customers so we never lose them, growing like crazy and working every day to be better than we were the day before.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

Success is a mindset and a discipline made of long, medium and short term goals. My personal goals have been around attracting and keeping great people, winning and keeping happy clients and growing our business in line with our stated goals.

5. What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company?

Autonomy, freedom, recognition, avoidance of stupid stuff and people I don't enjoy working with.

6. What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

Vision, grit, determination, resilience, hard work and getting the basics right – every day.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

Always people!

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

Great support from friends and peers. Tremendous value in peer-to-peer networks.

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

Business, and especially my sector, is riddled with sexism and discrimination. Being underestimated isn't always bad. However, it can be exhausting to have to work twice as hard as others.

10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?

Sexism and discrimination. Lack of access to finance. The fact the business world is structured around a man's life and not a woman's – especially a mother's demands (work is 9-5 while school is 8:30-3:30 pm). The fact is that women can sometimes reach seeming equality professionally – but most just go home to a second full time job as homemaker and mother. Until men share equal responsibility for things in the home and with children, things will not be fair and women will be exhausted.

11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

More impact investing in social entrepreneurs. I've made 10 investments to date through Canterbury Partners and 7 through the Evergreen Fund that I launched and run. Mentoring, investing in, and supporting entrepreneurs who are trying to solve tough social and environmental problems in a commercial way.

12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?

Not enough time to list all of them. The biggest ones were around trusting the wrong people, not firing under-performers fast enough, not standing up enough for what I believed was right (going along too much of the time as a team player).

13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?

They surround themselves with incredible women and men who believe in them and care about their development. Ask for advice. Find mentors and guides. Be brave. Be bold. Write down your goals and then a concrete set of actions to reach them. Work hard and bounce back fast. What you say when you talk to yourself is VITAL! Be your own greatest cheerleader. Know your worth. Don't settle.

14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?

Diversity of thought, perspective, empathy, morals/ethics.

15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?

Great teams at the office and at home. Couldn't do it without both.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

Be brave. Trust yourself. Be bold and never stop trying or getting back up after you've been knocked down. Create powerful networks and invest in them. Be generous in helping others, especially women, every chance you can.

TRAILBLAZER 3

About:

Name: **Samara Punjabi**

Business Sector: **Fashion**

Brand name: **Time Square LLC**

Start Date: **2004**

Nationality: **Indian**

Education: **Parsons School of Design**

Current Role: **Chief Executive Officer**

Work Experience: **Time Square LLC**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

I feel really fortunate to say that I have my dream job – I shop for a living. I feel like I'm a 'brandpreneur'. I launch and create brands that I think will work for the Middle East region. To this day, I am still very much involved in brand development - from research, brand proposals, buying, marketing, pitching it to the malls and finally launching the brands.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

A few decades ago, I saw a gap in the market here with a lack of some fashion brands and thought it was a no brainer bringing them to the region.

I have nurtured a life-long love affair with shoes and fashion. Shopping has always been my therapy of choice... in heels at that!

3. How has your business developed since its launch? What strategies did you use to develop it?

We have been through our fair share of ups and downs but once you get past the initial hiccups, our hard work thankfully paid off and our once small business has expanded over the years. Establishing relationships and connecting with the right people, failing fast, having a loyal team behind you, and being very hands-on with our brand development has really helped our business evolve and hopefully keep growing.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

Success for me is being able to do what you love and evolves constantly along the journey.

5. What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company?

I cherish our humble beginnings. Looking back, I think those were the best times! Starting everything from scratch, chasing brands with just 5 people behind you, typing away at our desktops in a 40 sqm office space.

6. What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

A good entrepreneur should have the tenacity to pursue their vision in the face of countless obstacles, the courage to take numerous risks, and the humility to pivot their goals when the situation calls for it.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

The most challenging would have to be launching our first franchise, Manolo Blahnik, in a market that has not even been exposed to 'Sex and the City'. As an entrepreneur, there will be many challenges but I strongly believe that there is no such thing as 'this can't be done'.

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

I am so blessed to have a strong support group in all my endeavors. I can always rely on the unconditional love and support from my family.

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

Since my world revolves around shoes, fashion, and the retail industry, being a woman has been a huge plus for me as I am my target market. However, I am not oblivious to the fact that discrimination does exist for women in the workplace, particularly in male-dominated fields. I truly believe that excellence kills any form of discrimination and you need to earn your right. The fact that we must prove ourselves every time is our main motivation to work harder and truly excel in our chosen fields.

10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?

Being underestimated and being automatically boxed into a set of preconceived notions, ingrained by society. On the flip side, I love being underestimated. It gives me fuel to prove people wrong.

11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

Still doing what I love, but with my very own brand and on an international scale! Dream big!

12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?

Not pivoting quickly. I used to fall in love with my own business ideas and not change or let go of my views. Now, I have learned how to creatively pivot and be more agile with my ideas, and this mindset shift has made me a better entrepreneur.

13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?

Women, by nature, tend to prioritize other people over themselves which makes them good followers or employees. As women, we were taught to serve and put others' needs first, which I think is a form of self-sabotage. On the contrary, it would be best for everyone if we prioritized ourselves and what fulfills us. Because in the end, we cannot pour from an empty cup. Self-love is the key. We should first be happy and fulfilled within ourselves to be able to become better mothers, wives, sisters, managers or CEOs.

14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?

I may be biased, but I think the benefit of having more women in leadership roles is that they are more creative, empathetic, instinctive, and nurturing. They provide a fresher approach and perspective in every business scenario.

15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?

Having an efficient and tireless support team enables me to maintain my sanity in the face of a seemingly endless home and work chaos.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

I know it's cliché, but still very true. Find something you love and work hard to find a way to be able to do it every day. Happiness, fulfillment and abundance are usually the natural consequence of this business / life template.

TRAILBLAZER 4

About:

Name: **Lucy Bruce**

Business Sector: **Marketing, Education**

Brand name: **Insignia, Home Grown Nursery, Harmony House**

Start Date: **2003**

Nationality: **British**

Education: **BA (Hons) UK**

Current Role: **Founder**

Work Experience: **Teaching followed by Entrepreneurship**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

Myself and my good friend Beverly Jatwani are Co-Founders of Home Grown. We opened in 2011 after we both wanted create a platform for children where the focus was developing their innate and intuitive love for our planet. I am also the Founder of Harmony House, an NGO in Delhi, India, that provides over 1000 children living in slums with education, nutrition, healthcare, hygiene facilities and, most importantly, the opportunity to break free from the cycle of poverty that they were born into.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

Beverly and I were both mothers and both had worked in corporates, although my background was teaching. I had two children at a very good nursery and Beverly's children had been to the same one, but we both felt that young children deserved the opportunity to learn about community, nature, partnerships and compassion. After much deliberation about what we should do, we knew that developing a nursery school with a focus on sustainability, social responsibility which was run by love, was what we wanted to do and exactly what Dubai needed. We set out to make our vision a reality without having any experience of setting up a nursery but immersed ourselves in every component. We learnt so much, made a lot of mistakes and there were times when we felt like giving up but we kept going and never looked back.

3. How has your business developed since its launch? What strategies did you use to develop it?

We started Home Grown as a passion and never had ambitions to grow and scale up. We simply wanted to provide the best Early Years Education keeping within our ethos. Our growth happened organically as the demand for places grew. We have never been dependent on strategies, but relied on listening to our families, the community and what they wanted.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

My definition of success is when you can rest your head on the pillow at night and know that you have done everything in the right way; it may not have given you the outcome that you wanted but as long as you have followed your values and your heart, you have done the best you can do. It took me many years to realize that.

5. What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company ?

The freedom of being able to create something from inception and work with people who inspire you daily.

6. What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

It sounds cliché but you have to have belief in yourself, your team and your product. There will be days where everything goes wrong and you don't know how you will continue the next day, but a good entrepreneur will face the challenges and set about how to solve a problem. For me, being honest and authentic means that even when you fall, people still keep their faith in you.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

My greatest challenge has been to learn to look at things from different perspectives and not get so emotional or upset when things go wrong. I have spent a lot of time reading and observing how to take all of that worry and concern and channel it into problem solving and productivity.

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

My family and friends have been my biggest strength and support. It helps when you have loved ones who believe in you and cheer you on every step of the way through the good and bad.

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

I am lucky enough to only work with women. I think this brings more compassion, understanding and allowances in the workplace. As a woman who has a family, I do understand the need to be able to balance home and work as well as the importance of good health and quality family time. Women are not afraid to show their vulnerability and have an incredible ability to pull together to achieve great things.

10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?

Honestly, I believe that as women, we can be our biggest obstacle, as society has taught us not to take up too much space and not to step out of our comfort zones. Once I realized that there are no limits to what I can achieve and saw that I had the support of my family and friends, I knew that success was within reach and to what extent was up to me.

11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

I hope that I can continue expanding Harmony House and spend more time developing our programs and facilities for underprivileged children and travel more with my family.

12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?

I think my biggest lesson has been that I need to always continue learning. There have been times where I believed that I had all the answers and would not seek advice. Now I know that I learn the most from others, even those who I may not agree with.

13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?

Women carry a lot of guilt: when we are at work we feel guilty that we are not with our children, when we are with our kids we feel guilty that we haven't done much work, when we give time to ourselves we feel like bad human beings. If I could go back and tell myself one thing it would be to release the guilt, it serves nobody, least of all yourself.

14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?

Women are natural leaders and know how to get things done in an efficient, kind and effective manner. We are able to read a room and be gentle when needed. Being assertive does not always mean barking instructions but listening to others and giving others opportunities to reach their truest potential.

15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?

I can't do what I do without the women around me who provide me with the ability to spend time at work. I have two incredible ladies at home, one whom has been with me for 15 years, who have given up so much to help me run my family and home. It's about supporting one another and helping each other to live the best lives possible.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

Do not put limits on you what you can achieve, nothing is impossible. You need to work hard and ride the rough waves but the days that are smooth sailing are worth all of the sweat and energy.

TRAILBLAZER 5

About:

Name: **Maggie Amin**

Business Sector: **Transactional Analysis Practitioner**

Brand name: **Changing with Therapy**

Start Date: **2014**

Nationality: **Scottish**

Education: **Undergraduate - University of London: Economics**

Post-graduate - Wealden Institute: Transactional Analysis, Psychotherapy

Current Role: **Founder**

Work Experience: **Therapist, Banker**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

I run a small not-for-profit private psychotherapy and counselling practice with offices in East Sussex and London, working with both adults and couples who are experiencing a wide range of mental health and relationship challenges. I am clinically trained in the psychotherapy modality Transactional Analysis, as well as being trained in working with trauma, I am a mindful practitioner, a mental health first-aider and a strong believer in the healing powers of yoga, exercise and nature - all of which I draw on in my practice, depending on the needs of my client, together with my life experience as a human being, mother, wife, friend and passionate environmentalist.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

As an Economics undergraduate, I took an extra major in Psychology in my final year at London University which not only did I thoroughly enjoy but also sowed a seed of interest. Following the death of my brother to suicide and after a ten-year career in finance, I took a career break to raise my two young boys and decided not to return to the City. Instead, I chose to re-train as a psychotherapist over 4-years, set up a private practice, and follow a career path which was more flexible, impactful, meaningful, less ageist and one which could fit in better around my priorities as a mother.

3. How has your business developed since its launch? What strategies did you use to develop it?

An increased use of available technology has been the core driver for change in the business / administrative part of running a practice. Technology has helped facilitate a more efficient and effective approach to meeting client needs, for example: -

- In line with demand, the practice now offers a hybrid service of on-line, telephone and in person therapy, primarily driven out of the need to adapt to Covid-19 lockdown constraints. This means that clients are no longer geographically constrained resulting in a wider range of client demographics and presentations and an ability to meet needs in a more efficient way.
- I now offer a free-30-minute initial consultation over Zoom which is efficient and effective and allows both me as therapist and the potential client to effectively explore whether or not I am the right therapist for them and to identify those individuals who either require a different type of support and/or those who are not fully ready to engage in therapy.
- Whereas initially clients paid in cash, they now primarily pay for and schedule appointments electronically which means 'there is one less thing to think about.'
- Potential clients can easily search for a suitable therapist and review and check my profile and credentials via a number of reputable search engines and governing bodies websites which I am listed on, including Counselling Directory and British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

As mentioned, I was previously an Investment Banker where success was primarily quantified by how much money I made for the bank and therefore how much money I made for myself. Success in the world of psychotherapy is much harder to objectively quantify although there are some obvious markers, for example:

- i) how many clients you have worked with;
- ii) how many referrals do you get; and
- iii) how many initial contacts translate into clients.

However, I choose not to define success in my practice by numbers. Success in my practice is not measured by how many clients I can squeeze into my working day but the quality of the client relationships that I co-create and the lasting psychological change that ensues. This was a hard adjustment to make as it can sometimes feel like it is "all hard work without any obvious tangible rewards or positive feedback." The work can be very challenging and takes time.

To sustain oneself through this journey, I have learned to adjust significantly and to not seek quantifiable rewards but to believe in the process, the work that I do and the impact it makes. The rewards can be far more meaningful and have a much more lasting personal impact.

5. What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company?

Having choice: -

- i) choosing to work independently;
- ii) choosing when and where I want to work;
- iii) choosing who I want to work with;
- iv) choosing the ethos of my practice and the way in which I want to work; and
- v) choosing to help make an impact to people's lives.

6. What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

I am not sure if these are 'qualities of a good entrepreneur' per se but certainly I believe these have been important personal qualities in my careers to date:

- Willingness to assess and, if required, take measured risks;
- Awareness and understanding of one own strengths and weaknesses;
- Willingness to understand when help is needed and to seek it;
- Ability to learn and grow from mistakes and to overcome obstacles; and
- Ability to pivot, to be open and flexible.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

Managing my work and family life balance and therefore learning what I can control and letting go of those things that I can't control.

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

I receive a lot of support from my husband primarily in terms of sharing the management of our busy family life. In addition, I am a member of a psychotherapy peer group set up by colleagues who I trained with. We meet for coffee, walks, dinner and drinks and support each other in our practice with empathy and good humour. Also, I enjoy a regular 'walk and talk' with a psychotherapist friend during which we are able to off-load our stress and anxieties without sharing client session content. I find these touch points invaluable.

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

In my current role within the "caring profession" I suspect that being a woman has positively impacted my work experience and, in particular, my ability to attract clients. Sadly, even in 2023, I suspect that woman generally are seen as being more caring, empathic and in touch with their emotions in relation to men who can sometimes be portrayed as being more strong, logical and less in touch with their emotions. I feel this heavily discounts the individual, their individual experiences and characteristics and results in sweeping assumptions and generalizations.

In my previous role as an Investment Banker, it would have been easy and lazy of me to suggest the opposite, that being a woman negatively impacted my work experience. I was regularly asked “How is it being a woman in a man’s world.” I have, of course, numerous examples of sexist comments and behaviors (by men and woman) and glass ceilings (for men and woman) particularly in my early career but, I also have many examples of incredibly supportive comments and behaviors by both male and female colleagues and bosses.

I feel that in reality, my experience has been far more nuanced than simply being positive or negative because I am a woman. I see myself as an individual, a human being, regardless of my gender and as an individual and human being I have brought to my work environment different characteristics some of which have been helpful and well received and some which have been less so.

As a young Investment Banker, I assumed that I had to ‘be like a man’ in order to succeed; however, I see now that EQ is as equally important as IQ in the professional world and “soft / people skills” are vital no matter your profession or gender.

Choosing to have children and choosing to prioritize the raising of them has, however, undoubtedly had a negatively impact on my career progression. It is still sadly not possible to ‘have it all’. I have witnessed many female colleagues who have chosen to continue to work full-time whilst their children are raised by a nanny or those who have chosen to give up their careers to raise the children and neither choice is perfect and without regrets. From time to time I have also witnessed colleagues whose husbands chose to stay at home to raise the family and for some that has worked.

10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?

Balancing being a “good-enough” mother with working and trying to create a satisfactory work-life balance. In particular, the long holidays are challenging.

11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years’ time?

I prefer to focus on the here-and-now and remain open and flexible with regards to the future as opposed to having a rigid view of how it might look. Right now, I want to continue to practice psychotherapy as I find it meaningful and rewarding; however, who knows how long I will choose to practice. The good thing about psychotherapy is that it is not restrictive in terms of age or location, it welcomes experience and wisdom and is relatively universal.

12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?

From time to time, I get pulled to please others and find myself saying 'Yes' when I really wanted and needed to say 'No'. It is an old survival pattern which I have been hostage to since a young child and comes to bare most often when I am stressed and need it least. It can often result in me becoming overstretched, with limited capacity, increased resentment and diminished ability to do my job to the best of my ability. I have learned over the years to keep this in check by managing my stress levels, increasing my self-awareness around this trait, staying grounded and present and being comfortable with my 'No's'. I have taught myself that my 'Yes's' only have value if I have the ability to say 'No'.

13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?

I have witnessed woman, myself included, losing sight of their core values and skills in pursuit of what they believe to be the required, often 'male' skills to succeed – e.g. being strong, logical and unemotional. Whilst being strong, logical and unemotional might be useful skills some of the time, other skills like being compassionate, engaging, fun, empathic are also vitally important.

14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?

I believe companies can benefit from not just having more woman at the top but also having a diverse, multicultural, multi-disciplined senior workforce who draw on a wide range of different skills and ideas.

15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?

I currently rely heavily on the support of a range of people whom we employ including cleaners, gardeners, a maintenance man, etcetera. I previously also employed a nanny and babysitters when the children were young. The cost of domestic support and childcare, however, is significant and for some an obstacle to working or creating a satisfactory work-life balance. I am incredibly fortunate to have a financially successful and supportive husband, without whom I would not have had the liberty to make the career choices that I have. My husband is also a tremendous support with his time, sharing the childcare burden, without whom I wouldn't be able to manage a reasonable work/life balance.

In addition, I try to adopt strict boundaries around when I work and when I am not available; however, the 'rescuer' in me finds this incredibly difficult. It is never a perfect balance but I have learned to live with how it ebbs and flows.

In order to manage my stress levels, which I feel is at the heart of creating a balance, I also religiously diarise and prioritise exercise five-times a week and restrict social engagements to certain days of the week and to no more than one or two. I have a strict bedtime routine during the working week and ensure no electronics after a certain time of night.

I also prioritize children / school events by fixing them in my diary and seeing them as immovable.

As such, I aim to give a greater priority to my family life as well as my own health and stress levels than I do to work. What I then aim to achieve is that I have more capacity to give more to my work and clients on a much more sustainable basis. This is not a perfect equation, however, and at times life becomes out of equilibrium with too much work or too much going on at home so I regularly need to check in with myself and am helped by a professional supervisor who I see for an hour weekly.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

Stay true to your values as a person in all aspects of your work – whether it be how you work with and manage people, interact with clients or drive yourself and your business forwards. Be on your own journey with your own parameters as to how you want that to be, including what is important to you and what success looks like for you. Don't fall into the trap of comparing yourself to others and making assumptions that 'others' are more successful, balanced, happy, etcetera than you. These are merely 'assumptions' and not facts... who knows how others feel ..stay curious and ask.

TRAILBLAZER 6

About:

Name: **Reema Ameer**

Business Sector: **Fashion**

Brand name: **Reema Ameer**

Start Date: **October 2013**

Nationality: **British**

Education: **Bachelor of Arts, Politics with Intl. Studies**

Current Role: **Founder**

Work Experience: **Reporter, Lifestyle Editor**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

I have my own bespoke fashion label, 'Reema Ameer' which I founded in Dubai 10 years ago. I am the creative director and I work alongside my small, fantastic, carefully curated team of expert tailors to produce women's ready-to-wear.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

Prior to starting my own label I spent a decade as a journalist, first in news journalism in the UK, and then as a fashion editor once I arrived in the UAE. It was my years working on magazines such as Grazia and Harper's Bazaar where I really got to spend a lot of time in the industry realizing that I was actually best at the creative side of things! After taking a couple of years off to have my daughters, I came back on the other side so to speak. Encouraged by my friends in fashion, I launched the label to a niche group of women in October 2013.

3. How has your business developed since its launch? What strategies did you use to develop it?

My business has developed and grown in a very organic way since launch. Where my clientele began as a group of local women in the UAE, the brand now has a wide global outreach with approximately 70% of business coming in from overseas. Word of mouth has probably been most influential in growing the brand, I never went down the social media/influencer route and never engaged in any traditional sales or marketing tactics.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

For me success comes from within. It's a personal and deep satisfaction that comes about when you realise that what you are investing your time (and often heart and soul) in, leaves you feeling content, motivated, driven, and above all excited. I don't define success in terms of sales, notoriety or numbers.

5. What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company?

The independence and the ability to work on my own schedule, and according to my own rules. Working for big news corporations and publishing houses in my 20s and early 30s taught me a lot in terms of grit, dedication and self sacrifice. It taught me resilience and how to give my all for the greater good, but doing it now for myself and for my family, has a whole different appeal. You feel far less resentful putting your all into something that belongs to you.

6. What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

You need to understand the importance of staying in your own lane, keeping your head down and working hard according to your own goals and standards. A good entrepreneur also needs discipline, stellar management skills and a clear vision. They need to lead by example.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

I would say my personal greatest challenge has come from not being good with the finance/accounts side of things. At first I tried to do everything myself, however, I slowly realised that you can't do it all, and delegating and being able to let go, definitely improves productivity.

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

My mother is my rock, its her belief in me that has gotten me everywhere in life. She taught us to love ourselves and that whoever we were and whatever we were, was ok and enough (this latter point is key). That led to an immense self belief which powers every facet of my life, from family to my fashion business. And, without the initial and continuous encouragement and support of my girlfriends - brand RA would not be what it is today!

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

To be honest, personally I have never felt at a disadvantage being a woman. Not when I worked for a huge global news corporation in London, nor when I started my own business in a traditionally male-dominated Arab world. The world - equality for women - has come a very long way, yes there's a long way to go which I'll touch on next, but I do feel that too often we focus on the negatives and how far we have got to go - but stop, look around, see and appreciate where we are at.

- 10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?**
I honestly think pay discrimination and the whole gender pay gap remains the biggest obstacle. Looking at the UK and US, whilst we have come a long way in many sectors and the pay gap is lower in some industries such as physical and social science (approx 10%), in others such as the financial world, it remains unacceptably high at more than 30%. How does that make sense? This very often stems from an unconscious and often conscious bias in hiring and pay decisions related to pregnancy/family etc. We need to change mindsets.
- 11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?**
Retired, living in Holland Park and walking my dog[s] for hours a day! In 10 years time, I would have worked non-stop for more than 30 years, I think it's fair to aspire to some downtime and living the quiet life of your dreams? No?
- 12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?**
Perhaps, as mentioned earlier - you can't do it all! Motherhood, career, health, well-being, social/friendships, philanthropy - it's a lot to juggle. At different stages in your life, it's ok to prioritise different things, do those well, and then come back to the rest when the time is right for you. Else you'll be jack of all trades, master of none - plus, you will eventually crash and burn.
- 13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?**
I think too many women bite off more than they can chew. As mentioned above, they try to do too much and then their careers eventually suffer when they burn out. Everyone needs to find their equilibrium and strike balance
- 14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?**
I think diversity is key. When you take into account the opinion of both men and women you have a wider, more balanced and accurate view of society as a whole - a broader perspective. This double sighted insight can then make products and services more marketable and in turn, a business more profitable.
- 15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?**
Identify your priorities. My kids come first, everything else comes second. That's my number 1 personal rule. Once you accept that, everything else will find its place in your life organically. That said, I have two daughters and I think growing up with a working mum will have an immensely positive impact on their lives. I'm a huge advocate of financial independence and raising girls to be to be able to stand on their own two feet, and to never be in a situation where they have to rely on their partners/family - or anyone, for anything.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

Do what you love. It's plain and simple. So many of my generation were forced to study law, medicine, journalism, finance etc - to have 'respectable' careers. Many of my peers fulfilled their parents' dreams of Ivy League and Oxbridge educations, law, medicine etc. And then, as soon as they could - usually when they became mothers - they changed paths totally, to follow their own dreams. One of my best friends went to Cambridge became a high-profile entertainment lawyer and after the birth of her son, quit and now sells beautiful rugs which she designs and manufactures high up in the Atlas mountains! Look at me too: Warwick University, Politics degree, job in journalism for world's leading news magazines [first Newsweek and then Time magazine] and now see? I design and make clothes, I'm much happier and financially much better off! Listen to your inner voice, follow your heart - do what makes you tick!

TRAILBLAZER 7

About:

Name: **Sapna Kewalramani Malhotra**

Business Sector: **Philanthropy**

Brand name: **NA**

Start Date: **2019**

Nationality: **British**

Education: **BA (Hons), Architectural Studies**

Current Role: **Philanthropy Director at KRF Limited**

Work Experience: **Reporter, Life-style editor**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

I manage a family foundation called the Kewal Ramani Foundation, we support programs in education, health/eye care, women & children's rights and protection and disaster relief. We work predominantly in India, Singapore, Nigeria and the UK.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

It's not a business, but a business essentials mentoring program (non profit) for women from low income backgrounds in Singapore with home businesses. This initiative is called Her Rise Above (www.herriseabove.com) and we realized many women entrepreneurs would like to grow their home businesses, but this can be daunting - especially if you're also facing financial instability and juggling caregiving responsibilities or health issues.

3. How has your business developed since its launch? What strategies did you use to develop it?

We started very organically in 2019, providing 1-1 mentorship to a lady and realized that this was something that could help others too. We used Design Thinking to come up with the program, to understand the user and need.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

I think success is every day - every time a lady feels more confident, does a happy dance from an order, innovates a new product, we have a new community partner, a new volunteer sign up and mentor a lady - this is success!

5. What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company?

There are no limits to how much you can grow and improve - when you feel ownership, it never feels like work. It's a channel for my creativity and I love the forever steep learning curve!

6. What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

- I learnt from my dad - look for something that can be done better in your everyday life, and do it!
- Mindset! Believe no task is too small but dream big - self belief.
- Creativity, resourcefulness, perseverance.
- Organisation, clarity - order is so helpful when you have so many different tasks!
- Having a strong support system - I believe family support is everything!
- You are privileged if you're able to take some financial risk and invest in a business idea.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

- Building the right team with limited resources to execute the work at the highest standard.
- I used to feel emotional burnout from supporting many ladies in difficult situations, I have since learned my sources of strength.
- Balance of work with motherhood.

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

- I am very lucky to have a husband, parents and siblings who believe in me
- Friends who are also my cheerleaders supporting the Her Rise Above community with their time and talent.

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

Only positive - we work to empower women and I find the woman to woman connection very strong - especially mothers to mothers.

10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?

- We wear so many hats and we are always second guessing ourselves.
- The balancing act we are always playing - I want to be a fully present mother and give my full to work as well!

11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

- My kids will be older, I hope to have raised independent confident girls who are using their strengths towards making the world a better place.
- I hope with every year of learning I'm able to find projects that I can add value to that help to reduce inequality and provide opportunities to people.

12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?

- I read a quote by Naval Ravikant, 'if it's not a sure yes, don't do it'
- I have made hasty decisions because I haven't been sure and not known my own capacity - I am learning patience and discernment in decision making as I get older.

13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?

I think women at work are a force to be reckoned with :) believe in yourself, speak up gracefully.

14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?

I think diversity at the top is important, whether it's gender, race, age and life experience.

15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?

Organization, pacing yourself, and being wholeheartedly present wherever you are, is key to this balance. My children are always first priority, but, I also think, them having a mother who fulfils her dreams is important.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

Strive for excellence, there's no such thing as success without hard work, make your project your passion and do what is truly you! Your purpose for your life has to be aligned with the career or business choices you make, build on your strengths and never stop learning.

TRAILBLAZER 8

About:

Name: **Heather Kelton**

Business Sector: **Film & TV and Adventure Travel**

Brand Name: **Inspirational Entertainment
and Inspirational Adventures**

Start Date: **2019**

Nationality: **American & British**

Education: **University of California, Berkeley**

Current Role: **Producer & Partner**

Work Experience: **Various Hollywood Film Production
Companies, ImageMovers LLC**



Interview:

1. Can you tell me about your work?

I started out in the film business as a production assistant, essentially helping make coffee and snacks for the crew. This was obviously not my dream job as I studied Environmental Design at Berkeley and thought I might want to be a Production Designer, but along the way I was given an excellent piece of advice from a legendary Production Designer in the industry. He said: "It's not the title or even necessarily the job you're currently doing that's important. It's the team you're working with, and the quality of the movie you're working on that really counts when you're starting out." The movie I was working on was "Jurassic Park: The Lost World", and the team was helmed by director Steven Spielberg.

I was then able to take the amazing contacts I made from this job to navigate my way through the industry eventually ending up working as an associate producer for producer Steve Starkey and director Robert Zemeckis, who has made numerous huge hits like "Back to the Future", "Forest Gump", "Polar Express", and "A Christmas Carol".

After having children, I decided it would make sense to team up with my husband Simon, a British writer, producer and entrepreneur, and start our own company, Inspirational Entertainment (www.inspirationalentertainment.co.uk), which is an independent British film and TV production company specializing in extraordinary stories that are hopefully as inspiring and as they are entertaining. Simon's movie "Eddie the Eagle" is a great example of the kind of films we love, as is our latest TV production "Young Sherlock", which Guy Ritchie is directing.

Inspirational Adventures (www.inspirationaladventures.com), which is an adventure travel company, was born out of our love of skiing, travel, and adventure in general as a way to keep expanding our horizons. We wanted to make it easier for people to find their next great, life-changing adventure so we built a platform to act as a marketplace for people to discover new adventures. We now have over a thousand fantastic trips all around the world on the site and are fundraising and growing our fantastic, young team.

2. What inspired you to start your business?

I was very lucky to get to work with Bob Zemeckis, one of the most creative and successful directors in the business for 12 years, as well as one of the best producers Steve Starkey. Bob and Steve always surrounded themselves with incredibly creative and talented people from all the various disciplines it takes to make a movie. I loved working with all these artists while also having to deal with the complexities of the studios and physical production. That led to the idea of branching out and developing our own projects with our own company.

It's important to enjoy what you're doing and what you're making to succeed in the film business so it was natural to take this attitude to create Inspirational Adventures. There are hundreds of trips we would like to go on so building a platform that would help people find their next great adventure, especially after Covid, seemed like a natural thing to try to do.

3. How has your business developed since its launch? What strategies did you use to develop it?

With Inspirational Entertainment we're not looking to scale our business in terms of people or operations. We want to continue to find, option, develop, package, and then sell projects to other larger production companies, studios, or streamers. That way we remain primarily in the creative development end of the business where we can focus on finding great stories, talent, and partners to set it up. Our strategies have naturally evolved over time as the industry changes and we're continuing to refine them as we learn on each project.

Inspirational Adventures is a very different type of business, being more of a classic tech start-up, but there are similarities in the sense that filming a movie or TV series is a lot like starting a company. Every time you set up a project you have to find the financing and put together the perfect team.

Inspiration Adventures also has the potential to grow very quickly so we are currently in the midst of a fundraise to provide us with the capital to expand our operation. Our strategy goes back to that early piece of advice I received: work with great people on a product you're happy to put your name on and hopefully things will go well.

4. How would you define success and how long did it take you to find it?

Success for me in the film business is all about creating something special and original that people can enjoy and be inspired by. Ideally, if people leave the theater feeling a little more empathy towards their fellow human beings or inspired to pursue a passion or get out of their comfort zone then it's a success.

If we produce something that makes people laugh or even just inspires a bit of thought or discussion afterward that would be a success for me. Getting a film or TV project off the ground is never easy so simply having a chance to shoot something is a major success in itself!

On a personal level, I think success is ever-evolving; it's being able to pursue your goals with energy and enthusiasm. Results are important, but I don't think the end result itself is necessarily as important as doing something you feel good about putting your time and effort into.

One has to accept that there are many factors in the film business and in business in general that are inevitably out of one's control so success is often the result of a combination of hard work and luck. It is similar to selling a script: you need some luck and the stars to align to make a sale but you definitely won't get lucky if you haven't put in the effort to write the script in the first place.

What have you enjoyed most about starting your own company?

5. I have particularly enjoyed the freedom it allows me to schedule my own time and spend as much time as possible with my children.

What are the qualities of a good entrepreneur?

6. I'm continuing to learn about what makes a good entrepreneur. I think they come in all shapes and sizes.

Perseverance, determination, optimism, good humor, and an ability to continue to want to solve puzzles and problems even when faced with setbacks. Knowing when to be patient and when to push hard, when to follow your gut, and when to heed advice from people with more experience.

Believing in yourself and your ideas, but being an equally good listener. Being okay with taking responsibility and getting it wrong sometimes. Ideally a good entrepreneur, in my opinion, should have the desire to create something that benefits as many people as possible rather than just oneself, constantly learning and being able to push for the summit even when you're tired and low on oxygen.

7. What have been your greatest challenges so far?

For me, the greatest challenge of being an entrepreneur is the financial aspect. When you have a job with an established company and a boss you feel financially supported by, it's much easier to plan what you can and can't afford.

Working freelance or running your own business requires incredible faith that somehow you will work everything out and the financial rewards will come. If money is something that you naturally or constantly worry about, no matter how you're doing, then being an entrepreneur may not be for you as there will always be considerable risk involved.

But it may equally be a great way to challenge yourself and you might just surprise yourself with what you're capable of!

8. What kind of support have you received from your friends and family along the journey?

My mom was a great support to me from day one. She encouraged me to try things, travel, ski instructing, landscape architecture, whatever it may be. "Give it a try!" She would say. She was incredibly open-minded and loved the idea of me doing something interesting and creative, but had no vested interest in what it was as long as I was growing and learning.

My mom never thought anything was a failure. In her mind, it was all just another learning experience. She loved coming to set and would have loved the idea of Inspirational Adventures as she traveled extensively and continually challenged herself throughout her life.

My husband, my friends and in-laws have all also been incredibly supportive. They like the fact that I am doing something unusual and creative with my time, which opens up a whole new world to them. It has made a huge difference, though, to be partnered with someone who really understands the challenges as well as the highs and lows.

9. Has being a woman positively/negatively impacted your work experience, and if so, how?

I was a young woman starting out in the film business in the late 90's and early 2000's so I think most people are aware of the challenges in the business for a woman at that time. Women often felt they had to put up with uncomfortable situations which in turn added an unnecessary layer of stress and complexity to the job, but I was very lucky to land at ImageMovers with a great group of people. I hope times have changed and now I feel being a woman is definitely a positive. Ultimately in the industries I've worked in, I've always felt things work best when there has been a balance of female and male energy.

10. In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle for women in the workforce?

Figuring out what kind of balance you want between career and family despite the pressure to try to do it all and despite what anyone else thinks you should be doing. Finding a workplace or career that will support you or at least be in sync with those goals. Leaving and then getting back into the workforce is also difficult. It would be great if things were more fluid and women felt valued and supported no matter which paths they choose or when they choose to join the workforce.

11. Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

I hope I'll be in a position to invest in a variety of young entrepreneurs like Ahana who want to make a social or environmental impact through business.

12. What mistakes have you made along the way and what did you learn from them?

Take the time to really think about what your short, medium, and long-term goals are. I probably didn't put enough effort in the early stages of my career focusing on medium-term goals. I sometimes got bogged down in the day-to-day stress or worried about the distant future without setting medium-term goals. That goes along with overthinking or becoming too invested in the outcome. There's a lot to be said for learning by doing! And never neglect your health. You'll always make better decisions if you are physically healthy!

13. What are some patterns you've noticed over the years about women at work, and things they could be doing better to advance their careers?

When I started out women didn't actively network and help each other advance to higher positions. They were careful about sticking their neck out in case it might reflect badly on them or in fear that there were very few spaces for women. Men in contrast seemed to view things more like a team sport, and if they helped someone advance they assumed that it would help them in the end.

14. Why do you think companies would benefit from having more women at the top?

One could make a case for companies needing more female energy in the decision-making process to bring about healthier and more balanced results for the group, but an even more practical reason for having more women involved at the top is that women are a massive part of the market for almost any product and in many families represent the prime buyer for most things.

Without understanding what women want, why they buy, and how they make that decision, a company is missing out on huge opportunities for growth.

15. How do you manage to support your life at home as well as your work life?

For me, time with my children at home has flown by so I think you have to do everything you can to enjoy that precious time with them. But it's easier said than done to get the help you need to free yourself up from tasks that don't need to be done by you. When you're starting a business you may not feel you have the resources to use outside help. If you can make it a priority, every little bit helps. It remains a tricky balance.

16. What advice would you give to the younger generation of girls about creating a successful business?

First of all, learn how to set up and run a business. There is a wealth of information out there about how things are done. It's not complicated to understand those steps and it will show you whether this is something you want to pursue.

Once you feel confident that you would be able to run a business, no matter how big or small, then you need come up with an idea. For the lucky few, this happens easily and often. For others, they have one great idea that they just have to share with the world.

Don't despair if you can't come up with a unique, sellable idea that fills you with passion but if you think you want to be an entrepreneur, you can always partner up with someone who has a vision for a product or service that you connect with. You need to be open and flexible in identifying what your unique strength is.

The world is full of entrepreneurs who took someone else's brilliant idea and executed it into a huge commercial success. You just need to find out where you should fit in that overall process. Are you the founder? Or are you a better fit as a part of the core team? There's no right or wrong. It just takes effort and trial and error.

The world needs people with ideas and people who can implement them!
Or maybe you're one of the lucky few who can do both!