

WE MAGAZINE

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CONVENTION



WE MAKE HISTORY
TOGETHER



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MONTE CARLO



MY DEAR LADIES,

I am happy to introduce the first issue of WE Magazine — another part of our Women Empowerment Universe that will reinforce the work of the WE Council and WE Convention. Giving women a media platform to speak louder and shine brighter seemed like a logical step. We want more women to follow the light of female leaders and join our movement to become leaders themselves.

As a child and teenager, holding beautiful glossy magazines in my hands, I always dreamed of one day creating my own media. As a young professional, I also voraciously read business magazines, which told hundreds of stories about successful men and, very rarely, successful women. Deep inside, I protested, "How can this be? Are there really not enough stories of women's success in the world? Who should I look up to?"

Today WE Magazine is a tangible reminder for me that dreams do come true, that I should dream big and act even bigger. And now I know that WE Magazine will be the place where women can find the support and inspiration I so desperately needed ten years ago!

I want women who are building successful careers and businesses, and who strive for self-realization and leadership, to find illustrative examples and practical recipes for success. I also want prominent female leaders to serve as shining examples — showing that success can be achieved and illuminating the path for other women, giving them more beacons to follow. That's what WE Magazine is all about. Dear ladies, we share a very important mission: to achieve the greatest results, to shine as brightly as possible, and to generously share our recipes for success with other women — to illuminate their path and show them the Way. Because other women need us, just like you once needed a woman like you became today. Let's go, girls!

MILA SEMESHKINA, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, WE MAGAZINE



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A Woman Who Built a Beauty Empire

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Founded by **Dr. Milena Almansoori** - a DHA-licensed dermatologist, celebrity cosmetologist, global speaker, and official Endolift trainer, leads our team and award-winning technologies. Dr. Milena created a network of clinics that have changed the standards of aesthetic medicine in the Middle East.

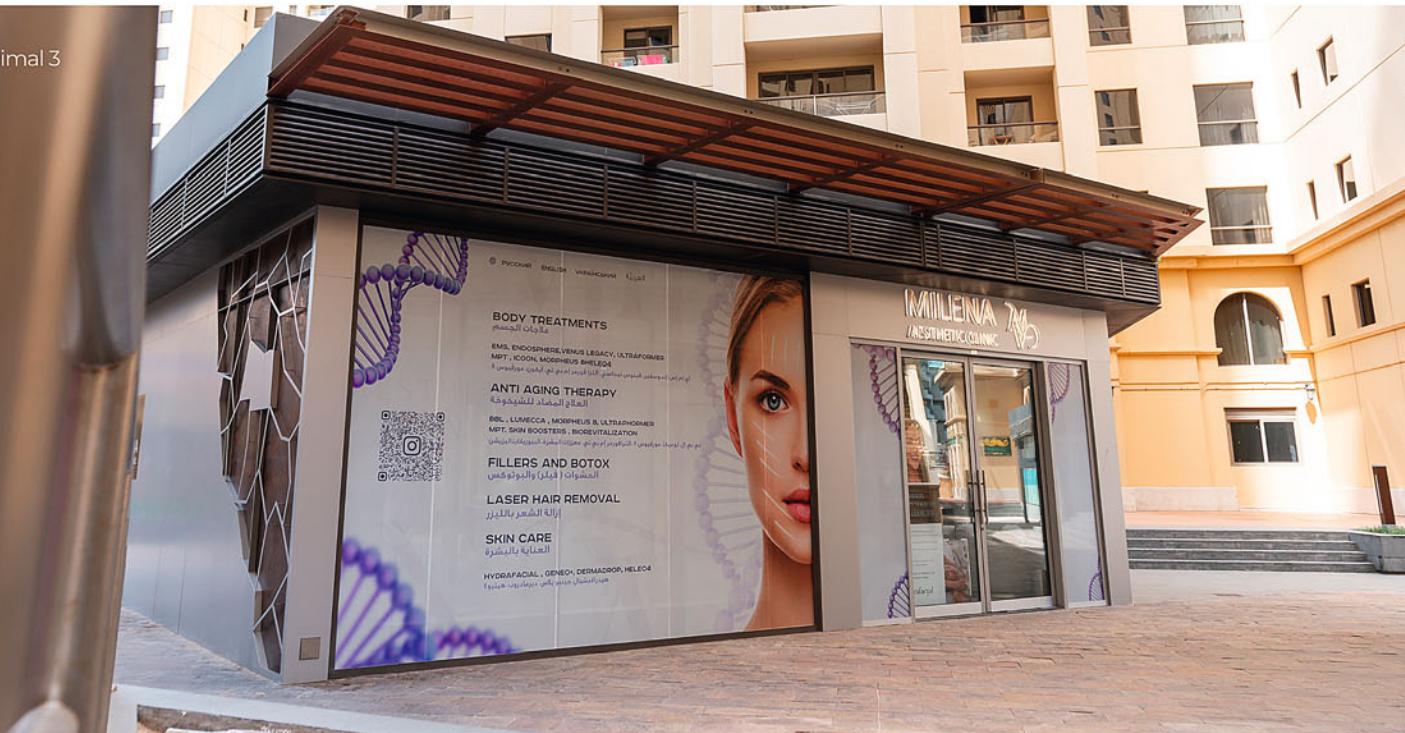
All protocols used at Milena Aesthetic are proprietary. These are not standard procedures, but conscious rituals of the beauty of the future, where medicine merges with the pro-age philosophy - not a fight against time, but harmony with it.



Dr. Milena Al Mansoori -
Founder MILENA Aesthetic Clinics



JBR brunch, Rimal 3



MILENA

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Muna AbuSulayman Sets the Rules

THE FIRST EVER SAUDI UN GOODWILL AMBASSADOR AND ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ARABS IN THE WORLD, MUNA ABUSULAYMAN GIVES THE BEST EXAMPLE OF HOW ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PHILANTHROPY SHOULD MERGE IN IDEAL WORLD WE ALL HOPE TO BUILD ONE DAY. HERE ARE SOME OF HER RULES THAT HELP HER DO EVERYTHING SHE SETS OUT TO DO.

Do's

Never too late. In the course of her career Muna was the driving force behind some very advanced projects in education, media, technology, healthcare and, of course, philanthropy. Muna thinks there is no age or any other limit for learning and reinventing yourself as long as you are curious, passionate, disciplined and healthy.

Keep up with the times. In 2019 Muna, who was holding quite a lot of board positions, forced herself to take a year off from all of them – not to rest but to catch up with global social, economic, and business trends. She thinks that no amount of past experience can save you if you don't understand changes and adapt to them.

Have faith and keep going. Muna believes that if you do your best in whatever you are doing, God will provide help. Especially when you are alone and struggling. According to Muna, people in that situation should look for signs that may come as people or coincidences.

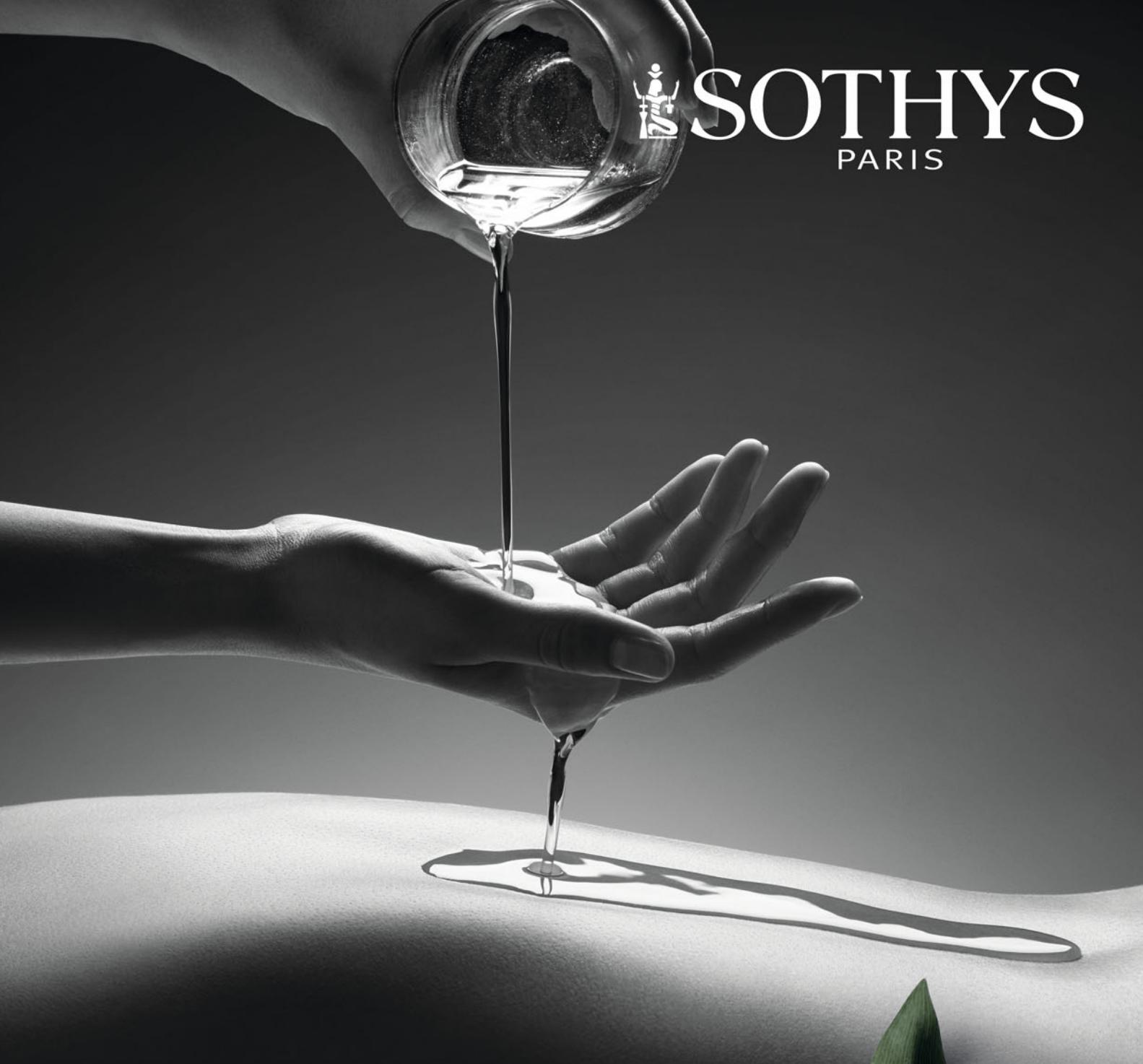
Don'ts

Backup is a must. One of Muna's rare failures was her modest fashion apparel line. She sees her main mistakes in investing her own money instead of raising funds and also in teaming up with people who were as clueless about business as she was. Muna thinks people shouldn't be afraid to go into sectors they don't know but only if they are backed with trusted team of experts.

Importance of work-life balance. Muna raised two daughters alone while being busy with her enterprises. For decades she was putting everybody's needs first, overworking and neglecting herself. She didn't even celebrate accomplishments because her focus was already on the next task. Now Muna wants her daughters, and all the young people out there to always enjoy the journey and not just think of destination.



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Leading with Purpose

ANDREA GONTKOVIČOVÁ (VICE PRESIDENT OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS FOR SOUTH & SOUTH-EAST ASIA, THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES AND THE MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA AT PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL) HAS BUILT A REPUTATION FOR NAVIGATING TRANSFORMATION WITH PURPOSE. IN THIS CONVERSATION, ANDREA REFLECTS ON HER JOURNEY, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION.

Andrea, you joined Philip Morris International in 1997. What drew you to the company, and what were those early years like?

My career has been shaped as much by curiosity as by opportunity. When I joined PMI in Slovakia in 1997, the industry was on the brink of enormous change. I was young, eager to learn, and drawn to a multinational with a strong reputation for professional growth. Those early years were intense. I began in Corporate Affairs, at the intersection of business, regulation, media and society. It gave me an early appreciation of how vital it is for a company not only to operate successfully but to engage transparently and responsibly.

It was also a period of transition in Central and Eastern Europe. I had a front-row seat to how industries adapt to change. That shaped my mindset early on: transformation is something to navigate with courage, integrity, excitement and long-term vision.

Since then, I have worked across multiple regions, each with its own political, cultural, and social fabric. What works in one country may not in another. Over time, my leadership style has become less about being the expert in the room and more about being

the connector — bringing voices together and aligning people around a shared purpose.

What does female leadership mean to you, and what has your journey taught you?

Representation matters. When women are at the decision-making table, discussions are richer and more attuned to long-term impact. My journey hasn't always been easy, there were times when I was the only woman in the room, but those experiences taught me resilience. I also believe female leaders bring a balance of strength and empathy. One of the most rewarding parts of my career has been mentoring women and helping widen the path for those who follow.

What advice would you give young women entering male-dominated fields?

First, believe in your voice. Second, cultivate resilience. Third, build relationships. Leadership is never a solo act; it's about trust and networks. And remember, authenticity is your strength.

Looking ahead, what is your vision for the next generation of leaders?

They will lead differently — more purposefully, more inclusively. Our role is to set the stage for that progress.

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Juggling Leadership and Motherhood

A SINGLE MOM'S GUIDE TO THRIVING, SHARES MIRNA ARIF, GENERAL MANAGER, MICROSOFT MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA GROWTH MARKETS.

As a woman in leadership and a single mother, I've often been met with skepticism: from those who question whether I can 'do it all', to those who assume I must be compromising somewhere. The truth is, I don't do it all. I do what matters. And I've learned to lead with clarity, compassion, and conviction – both at work and at home. Here are five practical strategies that help me navigate the dual roles of executive and mother.

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN BEING A GREAT LEADER AND A GREAT MOTHER. YOU JUST HAVE TO DEFINE SUCCESS ON YOUR OWN TERMS – IT WAS NEVER ABOUT WORK-LIFE BALANCE, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT MANAGING THE IMBALANCE".

1 DESIGN YOUR DAY WITH INTENTION

I treat my calendar like a values map. Time for work, time for my kids (who are no longer kids), and time for myself – each block reflects what matters most.

2 OUTSOURCE WITHOUT GUILT

Delegation is not a weakness. It's a leadership skill. Whether it's hiring help at home or empowering my team at work, I've learned to ask for support unapologetically.

3 USE TECH TO STAY CONNECTED

AI tools help me manage tasks, stay organized, and even send personalized messages to family and friends when I'm traveling. Technology is my co-pilot as in literally, Microsoft Copilot is my best friend.

4 RESPOND TO SKEPTICISM WITH RESULTS

I don't argue with doubt – I outperform it. Every milestone I reach is a quiet answer to those who underestimated me.

5 GIVE YOURSELF GRACE

Some days are messy. That's okay. I remind myself that presence matters more than perfection, and love is the most powerful leadership trait I carry.



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Protecting Yourself from Crypto Scams

PROTECTING YOUR CRYPTOCURRENCY ASSETS REQUIRES BOTH AWARENESS AND DISCIPLINE. HERE ARE A FEW ESSENTIAL RULES FOR PRIVATE INVESTORS, DESCRIBED BY MARIA ALLOTT, HEAD OF INSTITUTIONAL SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT OKX.

Our company, OKX, is a technology company building a decentralized future that makes the world more tradable, transparent and connected. We're known for being one of the fastest and most reliable crypto apps in the world, and have processed trillions of dollars in transactions. This underlines that OKX's ideas can be trusted.

GUARD YOUR KEYS. Never share your private keys or seed phrases. If someone asks for them, it's a scam – no exceptions.

VERIFY BEFORE YOU TRUST. Trust no one. Verify everything. Double-check websites, apps, and social media accounts. Words like "celebrity," "friends," "family," or "urgency" are often just baits used by scammers.

BEWARE OF "TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE" OFFERS. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Promises of guaranteed returns or

pressure to invest quickly are classic red flags. Legitimate opportunities never rely on urgency.

SLOW DOWN: TEST BEFORE YOU INVEST. Don't rush. Before committing large amounts, start small and test the process, including withdrawals, to confirm that a platform works as expected.

WATCH OUT FOR FAKES. Fake emails, fake social media profiles, and fake giveaways are rampant. If in doubt, back out.

USE OFFICIAL CHANNELS ONLY. Do not click links directly from others. Go to official sites manually. Download apps only from trusted app stores and avoid opening suspicious attachments.

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كيتو كارتيel علامة متخصصة في تقديم الخبز المصنوع يدوياً، الكعك الفاخر، والشوكولاتة عالية الجودة، جميعها خالية تماماً من السكر والغلوتين، لتمكّن متذوقها تجربة متقنة بطعم استثنائي. تُصنّع منتجات كيتو كارتيel بفخر في دبي، لتناسب من يتبعون نمط الكيتو كأسلوب حياة أو يسعون إلى أسلوب حياة صحي.

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Never Enough

SHE KNOWS BETTER THAN ANYONE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE IN UNCERTAINTY AND TRAVEL HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD TO REACH YOUR DREAMS. ARADHANA SARIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AT ASTRAZENECA, SHARES HER LESSONS AND DISCOVERIES ON THE PATH TO BUSINESS SUCCESS.



It's very common for people from modest backgrounds and modest communities, especially girls, to have little confidence in their ability to achieve success. What inspired the girl from Tanzania to go out into the world and try whatever she wanted to try?

Unfortunately, I had no choice. I left home when I was 13 years old because there were no good schools in Tanzania and the environment was unstable. So, I needed to be independent quickly and find my way around the world.

You decided to switch from medicine in India to finance at Stanford. What was the most challenging aspect?

I landed in a new country, in a completely new world and had to learn new skills. Everything was challenging, but I had already been living independently for the last 10 years, so I had some experience figuring things out in unknown territory. There was a lot to learn, and that was the exciting part. But it was also hard because I had no background in business, unlike other classmates in business school. I had not done math for 10 years while I was in medical school, so switching from biochemistry and anatomy to statistics, economics and finance was a big change. But a learning mindset helped then and now.

Most people are very cautious when it comes to leaving familiar ground for unknown territory. What influenced your decision to leave investment banking for pharma? How smooth was this transition?

I was also very cautious at the time. I was too comfortable, and inertia had set in. But it was the right opportunity and more importantly, the right people combined with the opportunity to have a different experience. Life is too short to not take risks.

You once said that you prefer to lead your team with influence, not authority. How was this principle formed and – since leading with influence doesn't always work – what put you in "authority mode"?

I grew up professionally in an industry – investment banking – where leading was all about authority.

While people were productive and intense, they were not always happy. And happy people will give you 120% of their best selves. I felt it was better to lead with influence where people feel part of the team and process. I am not afraid to use authority when needed, especially when making final decisions. The culture of the organization and the specific situation often dictate the best way to operate.

What is your perception of work-life balance? Is it even possible for a woman to reach and maintain it?

I think the traditional definition or expectation of "work life balance" is a myth. Every woman – every person – needs to define that for themselves. It means that sometimes you have to define for yourself what is a "non-negotiable" in your day or life. It could be dinner with children or making time for a walk outside or to read a book, whatever it is. The challenge for women is that the prime period of life for career progression, and for raising a family, are highly overlapping. The single most important decision that you can make for your career is who your life partner is going to be and how you are going to succeed as a team. And your "non-negotiables" can evolve because you will make different choices in different decades of life as your priorities change. It's not a race.

We know how passionate you are about learning. Do you have time to learn new things outside your job and what are they?

There is never enough time. You have to intentionally make time. I try to learn about different things and lately my focus has been on technology/AI given the impact it will have on businesses.

We have to constantly keep evolving. I am very privileged that I get the opportunity to learn every day from the great people around me.

It is such a wonderful time to be alive because so much more information and knowledge exists today and is accessible now than in the past. But it's about keeping a curious mindset and being analytical. There is also a lot of garbage and biased information out there, and you have to know the difference.

Your Freedom to Choose the Best

ALEX ZAGREBELNY, FOUNDER AND CEO OF R.EVOLUTION — NEARLY THREE DECADES IN SUSTAINABILITY, REGENERATION, AND WELL-BEING, TALKS ABOUT HOW THE COMPANY CRAFTS PREMIUM, EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT HOMES WHERE BEAUTY, WELLBEING, AND LEADERSHIP CONVERGE.



THE QUIET POWER OF RITUALS

In a world of square footage and speed, I speak a different language: well-being, longevity, and emotionally intelligent living. Eywa bridges ancient wisdom and modern ingenuity to create spaces where health, beauty, leadership, and community unfold as an integrated experience. We don't sell space; we offer a philosophy of living well: vitality in the body, clarity of mind, and relationships of the heart. Healthy longevity is a daily choice enacted through rituals that nourish and inspire.

Central to Eywa's story is the Tree of Life, a guardian woven into architecture and landscape. It is not merely a motif but a living symbol — a source of nourishment, resilience, and renewal that grounds decisions, from materials to daylight to ritual spaces.

Biocognitive science reminds me that genetics account for a minority of our lifespan; lifestyle, daily rituals, and environment carry the lion's share of influence. This is not fate — it is an invitation. Eywa invites residents

to participate in a daily practice of vitality: deliberate nourishment, mindful movement, restorative sleep, and meaningful social connection. Longevity becomes a continuous, cultivated way of living, where each choice reinforces the next and compounds over years.

THE PATH TO HEALTHY LONGEVITY

Eywa offers a refined path to lifespan, healthspan, and vitality, grounded in ancient wisdom and science. I favor practical frameworks that honor real living: daily rituals balancing metabolism, mental resilience, and social connection; evidence-based lifestyle choices; and a community that sustains motivation through every season.

- **Lifespan:** Practices supporting cardiovascular health, metabolic efficiency, and stress regulation.
- **Healthspan:** Habits protecting cognitive function, improving sleep, and sustaining vitality.
- **Wealthspan:** Sustainable living, mindful consumption, and investments in experiences yielding lasting well-being.

THE WELLNESS ECOSYSTEM

Eywa's luxury is a curated ecosystem where design, comfort, and function converge to support well-being and leadership. Amenities are integrated experiences that nourish the body, sharpen the mind, and elevate the spirit.

- **Spas:** Therapies blending traditional and modern science.
- **Gyms:** Open and private programs for strength, conditioning, and mindful movement.
- **Yoga Rooms:** Light-filled studios honoring alignment and breath.
- **Ayurveda:** Holistic therapies adapted for vitality.
- **Japanese Baths:** Tranquil soaking for skin health and social connection.

- **Saunas:** Infrared, cryo, herbal, Himalayan salt wall experiences for detox and relaxation.
- **Ritual Spaces:** Quiet nooks and ambient lighting that invite pause, reflection, and beauty rituals.

YOUR FREEDOM TO CHOOSE THE BEST

In Eywa-branded residences, I invite residents to embark on a journey of self-discovery, guided by science, tradition, and a supportive community. My role is to illuminate paths, provide tools, and craft environments where choosing well becomes instinctive and effortless. Leadership and empowerment are practiced daily as part of the lived experience, integrated into our rituals, spaces, and services.

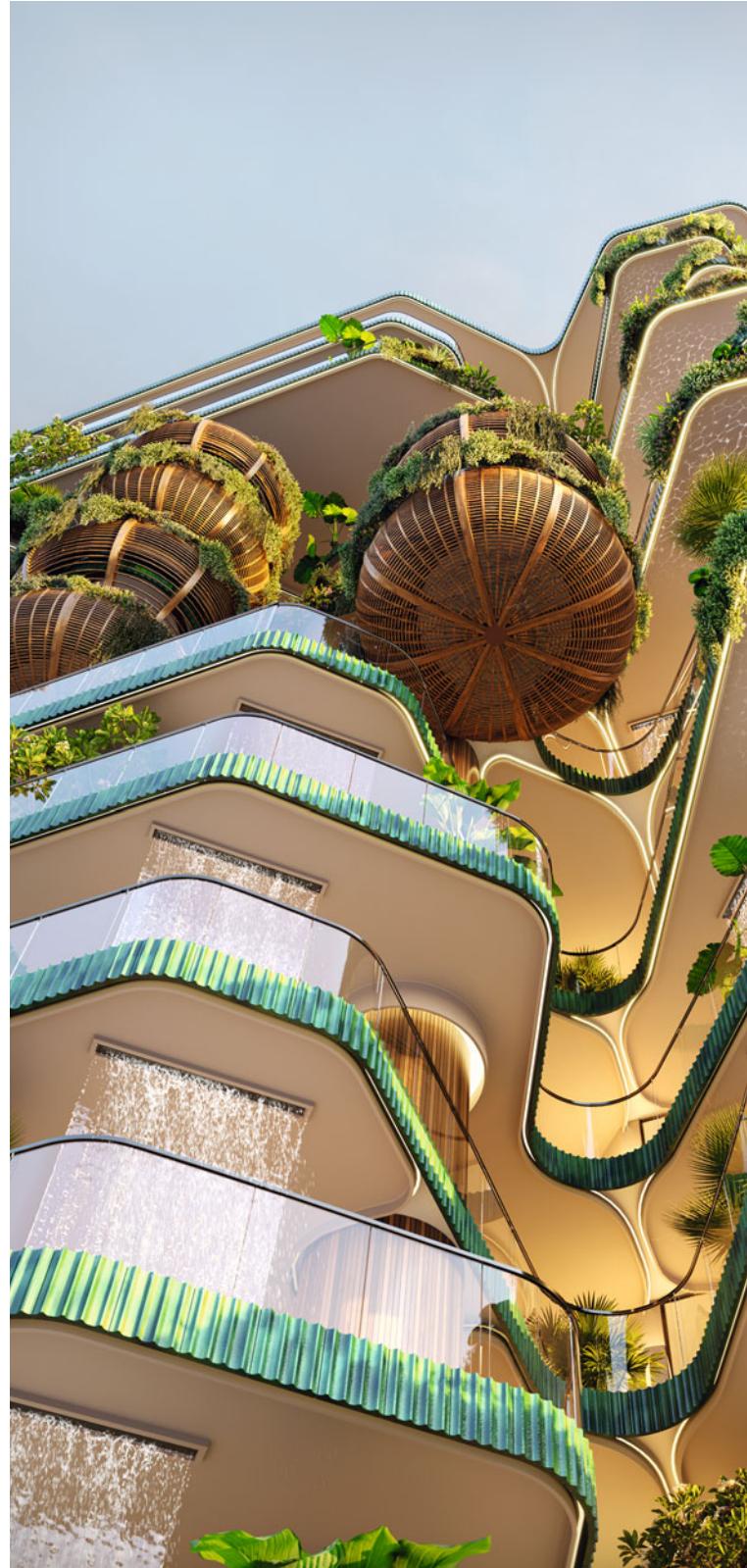
PRACTICAL STEPS TO EMBRACE THE EYWA WAY

And here is my advice:

1. Start with a ritual audit: map routines, identify what nourishes or drains, and align with well-being goals.
2. Integrate mindful practices: brief breaths, reflection, or journaling to reset energy and decision-making.
3. Nourish with intention: prioritize whole foods, hydration, and seasonal, locally sourced options.
4. Move with meaning: embed enjoyable movement into daily life.
5. Cultivate social connections: invest in meaningful relationships; community reinforces longevity.
6. Create spaces that invite calm and curiosity: libraries, lounges, and quiet study nooks.
7. Align with environmental values: sustainable materials, renewables, and responsible stewardship.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Imagine a community where rituals are daily: quiet reading, contemplative evenings, restorative spa moments. These spaces are not ornament; they are living infrastructure of a thriving life. Small acts — a mindful moment, a meaningful conversation, a walk in nature — anchor meaning, deepen connections, and extend healthspan. Beauty, vitality, and leadership are living expressions of a life well tended, a community well led, and a future we are building together.



All About Wealth Management

FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, SHE HAS BEEN CREATING SUCCESS STORIES ACROSS LEADING FINANCIAL CENTERS OF EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST, HELPING HIGH-NET-WORTH CLIENTS NAVIGATE CRISES WITH CONFIDENCE AND TURN CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES. MARIA VASILEVA, CEO OF AM WEALTH LIMITED, IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED FOR HER ABILITY TO THINK DECADES AHEAD: SHE HELPS CLIENTS BUILD CAPITAL THAT BECOMES THE FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM AND RESILIENCE.

ABOUT UNCONVENTIONAL INVESTMENT TOOLS AND AREAS

Markets are changing faster than ever. Traditional tools remain important, but new opportunities open in places where innovation meets security. The UAE provides exactly this combination – a safe, neutral environment with access to global capital markets. At AM Wealth, we build strategies that include international portfolios, local investment instruments, and tailor-made structures. Our mission is to give clients peace of mind by preserving and growing their wealth in a stable, geopolitically neutral environment.

ABOUT THE MOST UNEXPECTED REQUESTS THAT CLIENTS HAVE MADE

We often meet requests that touch not only on money, but on life itself. One client asked us to design a plan that would support his daughter's education and healthcare for decades ahead. Another wanted to create a foundation that would continue his charitable work long after him. These challenges inspire us – because wealth management is not only about figures, it is about securing people's future and leaving a meaningful legacy.

ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE INVESTMENT PATTERNS

Yes, we see the difference and it's inspiring. Men tend to focus on performance metrics, speed, and competition. Women, while no less ambitious, tend to invest with a broader lens – they see money as a tool for independence, stability, and care for family and community. This perspective brings balance to the investment world. I believe the future of finance lies in merging both approaches: precision and vision, performance and responsibility.





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& WELLNESS

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RETURNING
CLIENTS

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NATIONALITIES



My Success Is No Longer Mine

"LEARN TO SAY NO," SAYS AMNAH AJMAL, EX. EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MARKET DEVELOPMENT, MASTERCARD EMEA. SIMPLE STEPS TO BETTER YOU IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Global pressures drive employee burnout. Learn what's causing it, and how businesses can support staff with flexibility, autonomy, and smarter work practices. If you want to make informed, proactive career decisions, don't get distracted by bright and shiny objects. Use these questions to reflect on what you want and need.

What are three tips to achieve real progress and success in career?

You can achieve success without real progress. So understand that there are people who can do that. To achieve real progress with success lead with content, embrace empathy and talk about your and your team's achievements loudly.

If your working day has only five hours, what should and shouldn't you do?

Women have a hard time saying 'No'. Somehow we are conditioned to accommodate always. Learn to say 'No' to things that won't matter at the end of the year. Walk out of meetings where you learn or contribute nothing. Delegate more and pick your priorities.

How do you reward yourself for your successes? Do you have a personal motivation system, and what does it include?

My success is no longer mine. When you become a leader, it's your people whom you are helping to be successful. Their joy and smiles are the ultimate motivation for you to keep going.

WE STORY LESSONS: Our Journey, Our Momentum

THE WORLD'S LARGEST FORUM FOR WOMEN LEADERS IS TAKING PLACE IN DUBAI ON THE 1-2 NOVEMBER. TO GET INTO THE SPIRIT OF THAT PHENOMENAL MULTINATIONAL EVENT, LET'S GO BACK TO ITS ROOTS AND MEET THE WOMAN BEHIND IT.

T

The WE Convention is held for the third consecutive year. In 2025 its theme is "All in: Career, Money, and Life", a clear call to embrace ambition across every dimension. The focus sharpens on how women can advance their careers, raise and manage capital, and craft lives of meaning and balance. But, as highlighted as it is going to be, it won't outshine the ever-present goal of providing women with female role-models who can inspire, encourage and guide them towards success in any chosen field.

Even people who attended the two previous conventions might not know, that the story of the event started with the interview question: "Who is your female role-model?" The interviewee — Mila Semeshkina, CEO of Lectera, the UAE-based international EdTech company — found it hard to answer. She realized that most success stories were told from male perspective while women's achievements, in some ways even more impressive, didn't get nearly enough spotlight.

WHY WE STARTED

Our movement began with a simple, revealing question, and a gap we refused to ignore. In 2021, Mila Semeshkina founded the Women's Empowerment (WE) Council to turn that realization into action, creating a platform that makes women's achievements visible, accessible, and replicable. Today, the WE Council unites 30,000 women leaders worldwide.

Two years later the WE Council organized its first WE Convention in Dubai. Semeshkina says: "Our goal was to create a valuable platform for speaking up, learning,

finding the right path, gaining inspiration. We aimed for the WE Convention to stand out from other events". What makes it truly unique is that it brings together female leaders of more than 25 industries, representing public and private, corporate and entrepreneurial sectors. On the WE Convention stage speakers enter in a dialog, influencing both attendees and each other. "The event was exceptional, top-notch the entire way, one of the best I've attended, — said Elena Cardone, CEO of Build an Empire. — Mila did an incredible job to give ladies the opportunity to collaborate, to understand their value and power, take responsibility for the influence they have and change the trajectory of this planet for the better".

Our promise from day one was simple. We bring together real role models, share practical insights, and build a community where connections become opportunities.

2023 — LAUNCHING THE WE CONVENTION

In 2023, we brought that promise to a main stage in Dubai Opera. Our inaugural WE Convention was intentionally cross sector and cross border. Corporate leaders sat beside founders, athletes beside investors, policymakers beside creators. We set the tone for what WE stands for: ambition with substance, inspiration with access, and storytelling that opens doors.

1,200 attendees from about 60 countries got a chance to meet female leaders from all over the world, listen to their insights, find new connections and business partners. Among the speakers were dietitian, model and entrepreneur Maye Musk, model and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova, first female UAE Aircraft Engineer Dr. Eng Suaad Al Shamsi, XR specialist and brand strategist Dr. Giovanna G. Casimiro, real estate mogul Elena Cardone.

Anchoring our launch in Dubai mattered. The city's energy in finance, technology, and culture matched our intent to make women's leadership a mainstream, global priority. We placed MENA pioneers at the center of the story while welcoming voices from every region, creating a conversation that felt both rooted and expansive.

Mila Semeshkina shared her own success story — how she went from an ambitious and fast learning girl from a small rural place in Russia to a world class EdTech pioneer. The success of Lectera didn't come easy: it took Mila years to pass the do or die test of resilience, adaptability and faith in her vision.

She keeps pointing out that female leaders shouldn't get shy to talk about their achievements, they have to be far more vocal so they can encourage other women to succeed.



What 2023 proved: The demand for women's empowerment was there, the stories resonated, and the network started compounding. Attendees met peers, listened to the stories of successful women, and left with new confidence and concrete next steps to improve their lives.

2024 – FROM INSPIRATION TO IMPLEMENTATION

In our second year, we moved to Atlantis The Royal, invited two thousand women, scaled the ambition and sharpened the format. We kept the big stage for big ideas and added structures that translate ideas into action. Our goal was simple: help women not only see what is possible, but practice how to get there.

We introduced hands-on workshops, intimate roundtables, and curated mentoring alongside keynotes and panels. The focus included negotiations, capital raising, hiring and team design, personal brand architecture, and go to market execution. We also shifted from serendipity to intentional matchmaking through sector salons and themed meetups. We also started highlighting the people who make things happen—those running companies, launching new businesses, and improving the public sector. The message was clear. There are many ways to lead, and all of them count.

A centerpiece of 2024 was our expanded, hands on mentorship program delivered together with the female factor. We paired attendees with seasoned founders and executives for targeted one to one and small group sessions focused on real career and business challenges. Participants refined fundraising narratives, personal branding, pressure tested product roadmaps, structured compensation, and mapped next role transitions. The format emphasized pre-work, live feedback, and clear next steps, so participants walked away with personalized action plans and warm introductions to keep the momentum going.

The 2024 lineup featured tennis champion and investor Maria Sharapova and singer, model, and former First Lady of France Carla Bruni. It also included actress Meryem Uzerli, digital entrepreneur Karen Wazen, Dubai's first royal female pilot HH Sheikha Mozah bint Marwan Al Maktoum, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalid Al Nahyan Cultural and Educational Institutions HH Sheikha Dr. Shamma bint Mohammed bin Khalid Al Nahyan, founder of the first mental health clinic in Oman Sayyida Basma Al Said, CEO of Maison Schiaparelli Delphine Bellini, and senior executives from global companies including Microsoft, TikTok,

Visa, Mastercard, Duolingo, and Kraft Heinz. The mix reflected the event's breadth across technology, finance, consumer, and culture.

Editorially, 2024 was about capability and making choices. We asked speakers to share their lessons learned, not just their success stories. We designed sessions to produce outcomes in the room. We also doubled down on the power of community, because progress accelerates when knowledge and networks move together.

What changed versus 2023: scale increased, sector coverage deepened, and the tilt toward practical outcomes became measurable. We evolved from a conference to an ecosystem that trades in trust, tools, and tangible opportunities.

2025 – LOOKING AHEAD WITH A SHARPER FOCUS

The WE Convention is held for the third consecutive year. In 2025 its theme is "All in: Career, Money, and Life." Over two days at Atlantis The Royal, we will explore how to accelerate careers with clarity, master the money skills that unlock agency, and design lives that integrate ambition with wellbeing.

The theme this year is carried through every format, from keynote talks to mentoring sessions, so everyone leaves with concrete strategies for career, money, and life.

"Women's empowerment is best promoted by showcasing successful role models, and I am glad this simple idea resonated with so many women, — says Mila Semeshkina. — MENA and the UAE have plenty of female success stories still untold, which is also the reason why WE Convention is in high demand.

The more powerful women we have, who care about society and manage to balance their family and work duties, the better lives the country".

OUR BOTTOM LINE

We exist to make women's success visible, teachable, and repeatable. 2023 proved the power of visibility. 2024 built the muscle of capability, with practical mentorship turning insight into action. In 2025, under "All in: Career, Money, and Life," we are sharpening the lens on financial and career autonomy, without losing sight of the role models and relationships that make this community work.

The WE Convention is more than two dates on the calendar. It is a growing engine for women's leadership, opportunity, and impact, rooted in Dubai, connected to the world, and designed to help every attendee leave with courage, clarity, and a concrete next step.



POWER OF A WOMAN

MILA SEMESHKINA, CEO & PRESIDENT OF WE CONVENTION,
INTRODUCE THE WE CONVENTION 2025.



T

To those who are not yet familiar with WE Convention, I am proud to say that it is the world's largest and most influential forum dedicated to women's leadership and entrepreneurship. It was founded by the Women's Empowerment Council with the aim to provide women with information, inspiration and a network of support. I see our convention not as just a conference but a movement. With a global media outreach of over one billion in three years, we amplify the voices of female leaders and entrepreneurs, inspiring change and action.

This year we decided to go with the theme: "ALL IN: Career, Money, and Life", to dive into what it really takes to succeed as a woman without compromising any part of life. Of course, this is easier said than done. Even our speakers have vastly different experiences and opinions on the subject but I believe that each attendee will find answers to their challenges. It's impossible not to since we are bringing in more than 100 global leaders including executives from Microsoft, Meta, Estee Lauder, Kraft Heinz, Oracle, LinkedIn – powerful, influential women who achieved success from ground up.

Our lineup is spearheaded by veritable cultural legends. Anna Wintour has shaped modern fashion with her visionary mind and eagle eye for talent and potential. Candace Bushnell managed to turn a newspaper column into a sensational guide to women's freedom, our right to shape and define our lives. To hear them in person is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

In just two days, attendees will receive lots of practical insights and ready-to-apply strategies – from the main stage, in workshops, during round-tables and mentoring sessions. They will also join a community of peers sharing their experiences and solutions, connecting and forming bonds of mutual interest and support. Not to mention a

chance to attend our unforgettable WE Night which has already become one of the brightest highlights of Dubai's social life.

We are very far from exaggerating the impact of these meaningful interconnections. The poll we conducted after the WE Convention last year showed that 90% of participants were eager to come back for the next event, while 24% cited the convention as the breakthrough point in their careers. They said it gave them a clearer vision of how to reinvent themselves both personally and professionally, reshape career goals, accelerate or scale businesses, and build stronger leadership paths. This impact is why the event grows in scale and influence each year.

There is another testament to that. In 2025, I had the honor to be named the Gulf Business Woman Leader of the Year at the 13th annual Gulf Business Awards. I don't consider it my award – it belongs to all the ladies in the world, all the women leaders. I believe that we should speak up more, louder, take the center stage and serve as role models for other women. Strong, successful, female role models are essential if we want to encourage young girls from every part of the world to strive for better education, self-fulfillment and success. We need to show them they can do it by example because a good example works better than a thousand words. This is what WE Convention is for about.

This being said, I want to praise our speakers for not sugarcoating anything. Road to long-term success is never easy. It takes discipline, massive effort, persistence and unwavering focus on what you want to achieve. Great careers are built over decades, not weeks or months. That's why this year we decided to discuss how to do it without postponing life for too long, or making sacrifices we would later regret.

I am deeply grateful to WE Council – my strong team of over 30 extraordinary women – for their efforts in organizing the event. Besides our annual convention that will feature WE Awards for the first time, we are expanding our media presence with this magazine, planning new free business courses, seminars, multiple large-scale events and other initiatives to provide women with education and access to the tools they need to thrive.

My foreword to WE Convention 2025 will be incomplete without words of praise to Dubai, where the government has created a highly supportive environment. It allows women from diverse cultures and religions to feel safe and supported – that's why spirit of entrepreneurship among them is so strong. Studies show that 84 % of women in the UAE consider starting their own business. And we are here to help.



CANDACE BUSHNELL: “PEOPLE ARE STILL PEOPLE”

CANDACE BUSHNELL, INTERNATIONAL BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF *SEX AND THE CITY*, SPEAKS WITH *WE MAGAZINE* ABOUT MOTIVATION, HER EPIPHANY, AND THOSE NEW OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO US.



W

What motivates you profession-wise now – as opposed to your younger self – and how important is it for you to continue working?

Pretty much the same things that motivated me when I was younger: I'm fascinated by people. I'm always wanting to find answers and to understand human nature. Why we are the way we are? What are the factors that shape us, drive us and how? I feel good when I'm working. I feel like my best self.

The world has changed so much since you published your last book in 2019 – in regards to everything including overall approach to career-making, work-life balance, personal relationships, feminism. What new trends do you find the most fascinating and what dying out trends do you mourn?

I think the world has changed enormously since I published *Sex and the City* back in 1996 and has also changed since 2019. Technology continues to evolve and I do think that changes and impacts our culture. On the other hand, people are still people, with our very human desires for connection. So that hasn't changed. The trends I find fascinating are how many new opportunities we have to connect. There are all kinds of things that didn't exist in the past, including social media and podcasts for instance. On the other hand, it feels like everyone is so busy these days and there's so much competition for attention. It's all a bit exhausting. I often

marvel about how, twenty or thirty years ago, I would spend the whole weekend hanging out with friends and none of us were thinking about work but only about enjoying each other.

How do you feel about the conclusion of the *Sex and the City* franchise? Were you satisfied with the way Carrie Bradshaw lived her later years or maybe you wished for some things to be done differently, maybe truer to her original character?

Making a TV show – creating anything, in fact – is a huge amount of work. So I'm enormously grateful that so many talented people still wanted to continue the stories of these beloved characters. I published the book thirty years ago, so of course one hopes that in a different medium it will take on a life of its own, and remarkably, it has. Over the years, all of the people who have worked on the franchise bring their own ideas and experiences and their best self, and I don't think one can ask for more. So many women have come up to me over the years and told me how *Sex and the City* changed their lives or gave them a new way to think about their lives. I couldn't be more proud.

Are you as obsessed with fashion as Carrie is? How did you feel when you were told that Dame Anna Wintour is also going to speak at the WE Convention?

I'm not as obsessed with fashion as Carrie Bradshaw, but I did write for *Vogue* for a few years, just like Carrie Bradshaw! I wrote the 'People Are Talking About' column and many features. I interviewed Hugh Grant in London right after *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and wrote about wearing bold dresses (all the rage back in the mid-1990's) and posed for a photo with the six-foot tall model Jamie King. I loved writing for *Vogue* and I'm so excited and thrilled that Dame Anna Wintour is speaking at WE.

It seems that nowadays career women like *Sex and The City* gang are becoming more and more self-sufficient, they need a man for the joy of companionship. How do you think the exclusion of 'need' affects the dating/relationship dynamics from both male and female perspective?



**I SHOULD PROBABLY SPEND MORE
TIME DOING SOCIAL MEDIA, BUT I
JUST DON'T WANT IT TO BE MY JOB**



This is something I talk about a bit in my one-woman show. Back in 1996, when the real Mr. Big broke up with me on the same day that I got the galley for my first book, *Sex and the City* – a goal I'd been working towards for over fifteen years – I had another one of those epiphany moments: I realized I didn't want to be with Mr. Big – I wanted to be Mr. Big. Meaning, I wanted to be financially successful, independent and I wanted to be in charge of my own fate. This is something I see so much now in young women. They are educated and accomplished. They're smart. They have a sense of humor. They have careers and they make their own money, and they believe in themselves. It's thrilling for me that *Sex and the City* has had a bit of influence on helping young women realize their dreams.

Of course, women's economic independence has had some effect on dating and relationship dynamics. After all, up until the 1970's in the US a woman couldn't be economically independent, meaning she couldn't get a mortgage or have her own credit card, so this drove a lot of women's choices – or rather lack of choices. Now a woman doesn't have to stay with a man who doesn't treat her well, and has many more choices about how she wants to live her life, so I think we can all agree that women having economic power is overall a wonderful thing.

The reality is that there are so many factors affecting relationships right now. Now people can be single and this suits some people. There's also a plethora of other elements competing for the time and attention we used to put into relationships in person, especially technology. So while women's economic independence has had some effect on dating dynamics, it's certainly not the only factor. It's one of several.

As far as we know, you are not a big fan of social media culture. But as a public figure you have to have and use social media. How do you navigate, is it smooth sailing or not so much?

I'm actually not against social media at all, in fact, I find it fascinating! Like others, I probably spend too much time on it. I think I'm what they call a "lurker"? I love to check out other people's posts, especially friends. Although sometimes it makes me crazy if I see a really good party and I wasn't invited.

Some people are amazing at social media and I don't think I'm one of them, although I admire people who are good at it. I should probably spend more time doing it, but I just don't want it to be my job. I'd rather spend time in another medium, like a book or my one-woman show or answering these questions for you!

You once said that in New York one must know how to talk to strangers. What was the most fateful encounter you had by just coming up to a person and striking a conversation? Do you have some appealing secrets for young people who have trouble communicating offline?

Back in the day, striking up a conversation with a stranger was how a lot of young people met their significant other. And it could happen anywhere. It was the real life "meet cute", like in an old-fashioned movie. You could meet the person in the cereal section of the supermarket and end up marrying them. That didn't exactly happen to me, but I did meet my husband at a gala for the New York City ballet. In person communication is so important – after all, most of life's biggest moments still take place in person.

Being social and communicating in person is really just a skill like any other. I think it's about being interested in other people. Asking questions. I like to ask people what was the best thing that happened to them that week. Most people like to talk about themselves, or like it when people are interested in them.

Tell us a bit about the more personal side of you – what do you like to do when you are not working, what inspires you and gives you such a radiant look?

Thank you! The radiant look probably comes from lucky genes. I try to exercise a bit every day and maintain the same weight. I enjoy cooking when I have time, and in fact cook for my dogs – two elderly standard poodles. I guess my hobby in a way is socializing and going out.

Because I've been working from home for the past forty years, and working alone, it's really important for me to go out and interact with other people. I find I usually have at least one very interesting conversation and oftentimes several. I'm inspired and/or I learn something new and important every time I go out.



WHAT WOULD ANNA WINTOUR SAY?

DAME WINTOUR MAY HAVE STEPPED DOWN AS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF AMERICAN VOGUE, BUT NOTHING CAN REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF POWER SHE WIELDS IN THE WORLD OF FASHION. WHILE WE WAIT FOR HER TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE AT WE CONVENTION IN DUBAI, LET'S GET ACQUAINTED WITH THIS EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN MORE CLOSELY.



I think fashion is always important. It's a question of self-expression and a statement about yourself. And whether it's a loud logo you might choose to put on yourself, fashion can say so many different things. How boring would it be if everybody was just wearing a dark suit and a white shirt all the time? People are individuals and they ought to be able to express themselves. And it's a form of creativity.

I love what I do. I grew up in a family of journalists, where we were always being dragged home from vacation holidays, because some news was happening. In those days, you couldn't do e-mail or Zooms. You had to be there, in the newsroom. And that was actually exciting in a way. Our house was full of journalists and politicians and interesting people. And I find that today just as exciting and just as interesting. I'm always more interested in looking forward than looking back. I do think sometimes we spend too much time on nostalgia.

The New Yorker, 2025

I don't make notes, I react very instinctively to everything. I am a great believer in travelling a great deal and I really think that more than two people in the meeting is too many. Also the more you go out, the more you see, the more you experience life, the more you bring back to your day job. The problem with big corporations is that you have a lot of people my age holding on to their jobs, clinging to their pensions and not experiencing new things. They don't like change and disruption. Either they don't make a decision or they say no, and as a result they stagnate. It's terribly important to bring people in from the outside, especially young bright people who can teach you how to think about things differently.

Oxford Union, 2015

I'm an early morning person, not someone that stays up late and goes to the after-parties. After getting up at quarter to 5:00, I look online at all the British newspapers – New York Times, The Wall Street Journal. And if there are any calls I need to make to any of global colleagues, that's a great calm moment to do that. It's also a very helpful time for me to figure out the day, the week, the month. I go to the gym. I walk through Washington Square Park, which is always an interesting experience. I try to be in the office by 8:00 – 8:15 to start my day.

Vogue, August 2023



It is very helpful to those you are working with if you are decisive or at least have a clear onset. I worked with a lot of people who are not that way. It's very frustrating, debilitating and disrespectful – not to be clear in what you are saying or what you are expecting. People can react if someone says "No, I don't like it, we are not doing it", or "This is fantastic, go ahead", or "I am not sure, give me a couple of days to think". At least it's clarity. When you are not clear or decisive, you have a lot of people swimming around you, waiting for you to make up your mind. And that is just a waste of everybody's time. Most importantly, theirs. To me that's disrespectful.

**#ABTalks with Anna Wintour,
February 2025**

Maybe it's not very good way to be but I don't really follow market research. I respond to my own instincts. Sometimes they are successful and sometimes obviously they are not. But you have to remain true to what you believe in.

CBS News, 2011

What all of us in fashion have to do all the time is to take what's known and reinvent it, make it new and fresh.

Virgin Radio UK, February 2025

I don't care for the word brand, to be honest, it makes me feel like I'm in a supermarket.

The Guardian February 2025

I don't have any defined talent. I have friends that are athletes, it's a gift and a skill. I have friends that are amazing writers. People who paint – how wonderful and amazing is to have that gift! I have no gifts like that. I have an eye, an understanding and an instinct for storytelling but I personally can't do it. So it squeezes very neatly in a job of being an editor – where you help other people to form their ideas and put them out into the world. But as for myself I am very aware of my lack of creative talent.

**#ABTalks with Anna Wintour,
February 2025**

Getting older gives you patience. I think you learn that in the end everything will be fine. You just need to think about things calmly and rationally, try and come out making the right decision. And I guess there's not much left to surprise you.

Vogue, August 2023

A lot of young people tend to make mistakes – maybe it's because of social media culture we live in today – of wanting everything too fast. I think it's much more wise to find a mentor, someone whom you admire, whom you can work for a period of time just to learn the ropes. There are so many avenues to take. When you start out, when you leave university or college, you don't necessarily know exactly what it is you want to do. Use this time to study and understand all the different parts of business rather than to leap in thinking you are going to make it big overnight. It's highly unlikely to happen – as brilliant as you may be.

Virgin Radio UK, February 2025



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RONA RAHIM GETS REAL

**CEO AND FOUNDER OF RONA REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS, SHARES
HER INSPIRING STORY OF SELF-DISCOVERY, STRONG MENTALITY,
UNORTHODOX WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND BEING MARRIED TO DUBAI.**

C

Could you share with us how you first started in real estate? What inspired you to pursue that career path?

When I began my life in Dubai with my then-husband, I started my career by running a beauty center. It was successful, but life soon took a different course. We decided to move into a villa, start a family, and begin anew. While searching for our own home, we rented a villa and paid a 5% commission – about \$1,000 – to the brokers. At that moment, I knew nothing about real estate, but I thought: what an incredible job – meeting people, showing them beautiful homes, and earning \$1,000 per deal. My husband was completely against the idea, but I insisted: "At least let me explore it." I sold my beauty center and began by buying and selling properties for myself – thanks to bank loans, I entered the market at the right time – and not long after, life rewarded my passion: I landed my first job with Emaar Developers. Which was a dream come true.

How did you make them change their minds?

I didn't. At first, I bought my properties in secret – only my mother supported me, telling me to take risks while I was young. When I succeeded, I proved everyone wrong. My ex-husband wanted to leave for Canada over the next few years, but I felt married to Dubai – the one place where I've always felt safe as a woman.

What is your advice for women who want to build successful careers in real estate?

First, you need to understand the culture of the country and the culture of this business – and determine if they align with your personality. Then you must decide what suits you better: working for developers or as an independent real estate broker. You will have to do a lot of research about every developer in the country, their locations, and how they differ from the market perspective. This business is stressful, yes, but if you understand how to navigate the real estate landscape, it becomes very engaging and creative.

Also, it's important to have good role models. I have always believed in the vision of Sheikh Zayed – the founding father of the UAE. In his books, he

wrote that women need to work, be independent, and know how to stand up for themselves. If something happens in her marriage or family, she must be able to take care of herself tomorrow so that nobody can take advantage of her. He is the first man I look up to. The second is Mohammad Alabbar, the chairman of Emaar Properties. I am incredibly inspired by his success story – from nothing to where he aimed to be. Mohamed Alabbar provided me with a vision of real estate as a place of freedom – where I could build a career without being confined to a 9-to-6 routine.

A work-life balance? Is it achievable for women?

Honestly, not really. That's why I stopped separating my work from my personal life – I made real estate my lifestyle. I surround myself with those who share my mindset, whether in business, art, or wellness, so we grow together. Sports are

IT'S YOU FIRST – THEN EVERYTHING ELSE

my therapy – I need the gym, padel, or dance to escape daily stresses. And I've learned to be selective: in a city full of invitations, I only choose those that truly add value and meaning.

Rona, how do you handle burnout?

For me, the remedy is travel – especially to Moscow, my sanctuary. The moment I step out of the airport, the city's familiar scent transports me back to my childhood. I re-energise by walking its streets, enjoying comfort food, and catching up with my closest friends. I've realised that missing Moscow is my signal that burnout is approaching.

Prevention is always easier than recovery. When you feel tired or moody, listen to your body – pause, travel, do what makes you happy. Health comes first. Without it, nothing else matters 'healthy&wealthy.'

What is your advice for women who want to build successful careers in male-dominated environments?

It is vital to stay connected to your feminine energy while being consistent, resilient, and mentally strong. This combination enables you to handle challenges with ease and clarity, without being burdened by negativity. In any competitive field, there will be individuals who will try to undermine you. For instance, I've often heard remarks such as, "She is number one in sales because she's attractive – it's easier for her to persuade men." Instead of letting these comments undermine me, I choose to embrace them with confidence: "Yes, I am a woman – and that is my strength."



SHAPING BEAUTY

ANGELA ORLOV NOT ONLY CREATED A JEWELRY EMPIRE UNDER HER OWN NAME, BUT ALSO A NEW AND BOLD WAY FOR WOMEN TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.

A

As far as we know, your first career choice was diplomacy, which you studied before switching to arts and design. What prompted this switch?

I've taken quite a journey before finding jewelry. After university, I tried many different paths – interior design, real estate, even the diamond business. I was looking for something that felt practical, that would give me satisfaction in what I was doing, and also give me independence.

And then I started designing jewelry and something just clicked. I realised this was what I was meant to do. Creating and shaping beauty with my own hands gave me the energy and freedom I'd been searching for, and from that moment on, it all made sense.

Tell us about your first steps in jewelry design. How long did it take to find your footing and develop your own style?

My first steps in jewelry design were very simple – I had no team, no skills, just a few diamonds on my table. I played with them, found shapes that felt balanced, and created my very first pair of earrings.

People loved them, and I realised this could become something bigger.

For a few years, we stayed with these classic pieces – simple and beautiful – they had value and amazing craftsmanship but they didn't yet have a story or a real identity. We hadn't developed the style we are known for today.

The real turning point came during a trip to the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, when I saw the sculpture *Les Nubiens* by Ernest Barrias with a beautiful crocodile. I instantly saw the perfect shape for earrings, sketched them as soon as I got home, and they became a huge success. That's when I knew – Orlov needed its own identity, something bold and unique.

From that inspiration, our iconic Croco Dream Collection was born, and today it's the heart of our brand.

You entered a competition against all the famous fashion houses with their jewelry lines, plus tried and tested jewelry brands. Weren't you intimidated? What gave you confidence to believe that you can fit in and create something original?

Yes, of course I had fear in the beginning – these brands have so much heritage and experience – but I didn't let that fear stand in my way. If you're authentic and truly passionate about what you're doing, nothing can stop you. I admire those houses, but they only inspire me to grow and to stay true to my own vision.



PHOTO: ARCHIVE OF PRESS SERVICES

CROCO SKIN EARRINGS WITH DIAMONDS AND COLUMBIAN EMERALDS, CARESSE DE CROCO CHOKER IN GOLD AND DIAMONDS, SKIN CHOKER WITH DIAMONDS AND CENTRAL COLUMBIAN EMERALD OF 4 CARATS, OPHIDIA EARRINGS WITH DIAMONDS AND COLUMBIAN EMERALDS, ALL ORLOV



What was the most surprising aspect of working with jewelry you didn't foresee or know about before you had started to do it professionally?

What I didn't know at the beginning is that the hardest thing to design is actually the simplest piece. It takes so much skill, creativity, and imagination to make something small, affordable, wearable, and still special.

Designing a very expensive piece is actually easier, because you are not limited by materials or budget. But when you create an entry-level piece, you are limited – you have to think about everything: the weight, the carats of gold, the price and still imagine and create something special. As Leonardo da Vinci said, simplicity is the ultimate sophistication and I completely agree with that.

That balance – to keep it beautiful, meaningful, affordable, and wearable – is one of the biggest challenges, and one of the most surprising things I learned about jewelry design

Can you describe your creative process – how you form and materialize your ideas, match them to particular motives, metals and stones? What does it mean to you to work in partnership with your husband and how does it work?

For me, inspiration always starts with nature: a beautiful shape, a pattern, a texture. The moment I see something that speaks to me, I start imagining how it could become a piece of jewelry.

When I design, I follow my own little rule. Every piece must have three things: emotion, proportion, and surprise. It has to feel balanced and sit beautifully, but there should always be an element of surprise, something that makes people turn their heads. And above all, it has to be meaningful – a piece with a story, something that carries emotion.

Working with my husband is very special – it's both a gift and a challenge at the same time. We share the same dream and build it together. We each have our own areas of responsibility: I'm a head of design and he is responsible for production and sourcing. As long as we don't interfere with

each other's part, everything works out perfectly. He's an amazing partner and always so supportive. I'm truly happy that we do business together – and it's never boring).

What does jewelry represent in the modern world and for you personally?

Jewelry speaks for you without saying a word. It shows your style, your personality, your status. It holds true value and carries your memories, becoming part of who you are. And especially with our Croco Dream Collection – the crocodile is such a symbolic animal. It feels like armor, a kind of protection for the woman who wears it. In a way, any piece from the Croco Dream Collection can serve as a talisman, a symbol of strength and protection for its owner.

Can you share some tips and observations for women who want to have a career in design?

If something feels like your passion, don't wait or overthink – just start. Learn, build your skills, try, take risks, make mistakes, and let them teach you. Don't let fear or challenges stop you. And don't worry about rivals. Let them inspire you, but stay true to your own vision. That's what will make your work stand out.



HER EXCELLENCY HALA BADRI'S GUIDE TO LEADERSHIP

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DUBAI CULTURE AND ARTS AUTHORITY
DESCRIBES A GREAT LEADER AS SOMEONE WHO IS BOTH A LIFELONG
LEARNER AND A FLEXIBLE NAVIGATOR OF CHANGE.



B

Before taking her current position, Her Excellency Hala Badri gained extensive knowledge and experience in various fields, including oil and gas, real estate, media, and telecommunications. Building such a distinguished career was twice as challenging since Her Excellency is also a devoted mother of four. Her ability to excel in her career while raising a family (a journey familiar to many women around the world), inspired us to study her path and learn from it.

GO UP GRADUALLY. When Hala Badri started her career as a brand executive at Emirates National Oil Company, she became one half of the two-person team charged with getting the newly-organized department up and going. That allowed her to learn how to build functions from scratch and to lead a team that grew to 15 people over the years. That experience served Her Excellency well throughout her career.

FEAR OF CHANGE IS NOT THE REASON TO MISS OPPORTUNITIES. Almost 8 years later, Hala Badri was offered the role of Director for Corporate Communications at the telecommunications company du, a position she embraced out of her passion for new challenges. She doesn't hide the fact that her professional confidence took some heavy blows in the new environment. Not only were all other executives older, but they were also all men. Although she didn't experience prejudice, she initially found it hard to speak up at boardroom meetings because she struggled with new terminology and understanding the way du managed its financial affairs. Her Excellency admits that it took her two years to adapt fully. But she firmly believed in her vision of a brand strategy, which indeed proved to be successful.

TIME- MANAGEMENT IS PARAMOUNT

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH THE RIGHT MINDSET. Her Excellency believes that achieving a work-life balance depends on your ability to draw the line before your work starts to impact your personal well-being negatively. In her opinion, self-inflicted pressure to do better doesn't get the job done; it only causes unnecessary stress. She points out that it's natural for human beings to make mistakes and mess things up in their personal and professional lives.

TIME-MANAGEMENT IS PARAMOUNT. Over the years, Her Excellency learned to prioritize tasks by urgency and importance, effectively delegate, and maintain open communication with everyone involved. She is a big fan of structured schedules and integrated plans. Disciplined and organized, Her Excellency Hala Badri divides her time into three segments. The first one is her main job. Her professional commitments come next. She holds positions on several boards, including Vice Chairperson of the Dubai Women Establishment's Board of Directors and Vice Chairman of HIPA's Board of Trustees, among many others. Last but not least is her personal time. She spends most of it with her children and friends, and the rest goes to hobbies such as padel, cooking and interior design. Her Excellency exercises three times a week, goes for walks every evening, and calls it a day at 10:00 p.m.

SHARING IS CARING. Her Excellency Hala Badri is very dedicated to her role as a mentor. She believes that women's natural inclination to nurture is a strength that can guide the next generation. She teaches UAE youth to always see the big picture, learn continuously, and try new things. Discovering young talent and helping them grow is her greatest inspiration and reward.





SURREALISTIC WORLDS OF ELSA SCHIAPARELLI

IT TOOK SOME YEARS FOR THE REVIVED MAISON SCHIAPARELLI TO CLAIM BACK ICONIC STATUS IT ONCE HELD. BUT AS THE WORLD FALLS IN LOVE AGAIN WITH ITS INVENTIVE IMAGINATION AND REVOLUTIONARY VISION, IT'S TIME TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE FOUNDER – INIMITABLE SCHIAP.



F

Elsa Schiaparelli – or Schiap as she called herself – didn't have any formal training in fashion design but she was artistic, inventive and free-spirited from childhood. She was born in Rome in 1890 to the wealthy family of aristocrats and scholars. Elsa's early interest in transformative aspect of fashion came from rather heartless remarks of her mother who used to say that Elsa was as ugly as her sister was beautiful.

No wonder that idea of transformation, preferably instant and magical, took deep roots in young Elsa's head. She became interested in everything connected to the theme – from contents of her mother's wardrobe to ancient myths, mysticism and surrealistic art. Later, she even influenced some of the latter by telling close friend Salvador Dalí the story of her childhood attempt to transform herself into a garden by planting flower seeds in her throat, ears, nose and eyes. Flower-headed women went on to serve as a center of at least three Dalí's paintings.

Elsa's free spirit and unconventional interests put her in a lot of trouble with her conservative family. At 23, she ran away from home, married a con-artist posing as spiritual teacher with mystical powers, and ended up in Paris where she almost accidentally discovered a talent for fashion design. She befriended an Armenian woman who did hand-knitting and placed an order for the pullover of her own design, based on optical illusions. It was meant to be a one-of-a-kind thing for herself but the design started 'trending' as we would say nowadays.

In 1927, Schiaparelli launched her career by selling hand-knitted sweaters with a 'trompe l'œil' motif from her apartment. By 1932, she was the proud owner of the fashion salon with eight very busy ateliers. Elsa picked technical skills of pattern-making and clothing construction as she went, using tips from her mentor, renowned fashion designer Paul Poiret, who taught her how to drape fabric directly on the body.

In 1935, Elsa moved to 21 Place Vendôme, the address that is now associated with Maison Schiaparelli yet again. By this time, her brand had expanded with perfume, jewelry, and accessories. She collaborated with great artists such as Salvador Dalí, Jean Cocteau, Elsa Triolet, who saw her as a creative force to be reckoned with. At some point Schiaparelli was proclaimed a contender for the title of 'Fashion Queen' firmly occupied by Coco Chanel. Critics called Elsa a visionary who could see far into the future, and they were not wrong. She introduced 'shocking pink',





a color that many years later took the world by storm. She was the first to add matching jackets to evening dresses, incorporate interior bras in swimsuits, make fastenings – zippers and buttons – visible and turn them into accents. Inspiration behind Elsa's avant-garde creations came from various sources such as Italian folklore, Eastern philosophies and religions that were the academic specialty of her father, astronomy she learned from her uncle, theosophy, occult teachings, and the artistry of her friends. She used principles of Euclidian geometry, innovative fabrics and prints (including newspaper print), materials that changed with the lighting, and strong contrasting colors.

Although Elsa was undoubtedly gifted and sophisticated, her business instincts were not as sharp as they should have been in challenging times after WW2. Maybe it was because she had always been wealthy and quite uninterested in becoming wealthier. Maison Schiaparelli closed due to bankruptcy in 1953. Elsa retired with no particular regrets and died twenty years later out of the spotlight.

Maison Schiaparelli reopened in 2012 and bloomed with the appointment of Daniel Roseberry as its artistic director. He says: "I am blown away and humbled by the relevance that Schiap's work still has. The more I reference it and use it as a starting point, the better it makes my creations. What I enjoy the most is that with Chanel, Dior or Balenciaga you get a vision, savoir-faire, technique, world-changing silhouettes – but not true personality or sense of humor like you do with Schiaparelli. That is her greatest legacy, and what gives me permission to imbue that into my work as well".

WE TIPS

From autobiography *Shocking Life* by Elsa Schiaparelli:
"Know yourselves. When you take off your clothes, your personality also undresses and you become quite a different person".
"Dare to be different".





DR. MAKY ZANGANEH: “YOU CAN NEVER FORGET IT”

**FROM WAR-TORN CHILDHOOD TO BILLION-DOLLAR BREAKTHROUGHS,
AND A MISSION TO DEFEAT CANCER: THE TRUE STORY OF DR. MAKY
ZANGANEH.**



F

Few lives embody resilience, reinvention, and relentless purpose like that of Dr. Maky Zanganeh. A global biotech leader, bestselling author, and cancer survivor – recognized by Forbes in 2025 as one of America's self-made female billionaires – she has transformed personal adversity into groundbreaking innovation. One of her guiding mottos comes from Bob Marley: "You never know how strong you are until being strong is your only option." Those words echo in her journey, as war, displacement, and illness shaped a woman who thinks fast, acts fearlessly, and embraces every challenge head-on.

Born in Tehran in 1970, Dr. Zanganeh grew up during the Iranian Revolution and the Iran–Iraq War. As a teenager, she left her homeland to finish high school in Germany, later joining her sisters in France. While they pursued medicine, she studied dentistry at Louis Pasteur University in Strasbourg and earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree in 1995. Dentistry offered stability, but her vision extended far beyond private practice. Determined to make a broader impact, she went on to earn an MBA and entered the fast-moving world of healthcare and medical business.

In 1997, she joined Computer Motion, a pioneering surgical robotics company, as President of EMEA. Her bold career pivot soon took her to California, where she became Global Vice President of Training and Education. Following Computer Motion's 2003 merger with Intuitive Surgical (NASDAQ: ISRG), Dr. Zanganeh partnered with Bob Duggan, an entrepreneur who later became her husband and father of her son, to tackle an even greater challenge: developing lifesaving therapies for cancer patients.

In 2008, they took over Pharmacyclics, then a struggling biotech firm, and turned it into one of the most remarkable success stories in oncology. Their work led to IMBRUVICA®, a groundbreaking therapy for blood cancers that transformed countless lives. In 2015, the company was acquired by AbbVie in a landmark \$21 billion transaction—one of the largest in biopharma history.

But Dr. Zanganeh's story is not defined by financial triumph alone. In 2019, she faced a deeply personal battle: a diagnosis of stage II breast cancer. She endured grueling chemotherapy through the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing on the same resilience that powered her professional success. Instead of retreating, she used that period to write *The Magic of Normal*, a powerful memoir chronicling her journey from biotech executive to patient and survivor. Today, as Co-CEO and President of Summit Therapeutics (NASDAQ: SMMT), Dr. Zanganeh once again partners with Bob Duggan to advance groundbreaking therapies. Her mission remains clear: to collapse time for patients and bring lifesaving treatments to those in need.



ALL SURVIVORS SHARE THE SAME FEAR: CAN CANCER COME BACK?

"Before diagnosis, you believe it will never touch you" she reflects. "After, you can never forget it. I don't wish my path on anyone, but every challenge – revolution, risk, illness – shaped who I am. Each one was an experience I am profoundly grateful to have lived."

From a childhood marked by war to boardrooms shaping the future of medicine, Dr. Maky Zanganeh embodies the power of perseverance. Her life is proof that strength is not just a trait, it is a choice, forged in the crucible of extraordinary challenges.



STORIES TO SUCCESS

TATIANA VOLODINA WORKS HER MAGIC



PHOTO: ARCHIVE OF PRESS SERVICES

**PRESIDENT OF THE LETOILE GROUP
LEADS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST
INFLUENTIAL BEAUTY RETAILERS.
TATIANA'S OPINIONS CARRY A LOT OF
WEIGHT IN HER INDUSTRY AS WELL AS
IN OUR VIRTUAL TEXTBOOK OF FEMALE
LEADERSHIP.**

www.letoile.ae

T

Tatiana, your colleagues and partners describe you as one of the most level-headed and positive business leaders, who is also very generous in sharing ideas. How did you develop these qualities in generally tense business environment?

You know, I can't say I was consciously developing these qualities. What I developed over the years of working with people in the realm of beauty was the approach to certain things.

Firstly, focus must be on people, not on problems. In the beauty industry we deal with something extremely delicate and valuable— people's emotions and the way they see themselves. When difficulties

arise, either with a client or within the team, it's easier to focus on the problem. But to see people behind problems is much more effective. What troubles them? What motivates them? What outcome will make them happy? This shift in focus from "what went wrong" to "who are we doing this for" instantly clears the picture, brings peace of mind and energy for problem-solving.

Secondly, I see beauty as a source of positivity. Our mission is to recharge people with the energy of beauty. New fragrance, lipstick, well-suited cream improve client's mood, make her smile, reinforce her desire to move forward and enjoy life. This joy is contagious. I truly believe in power of beauty products, and that is my inner source of energy and optimism. I don't see my work as a routine because it gives me the opportunity to perform small miracles on a daily basis.

Thirdly, conscious learning and curiosity are paramount. Beauty industry is never still, it constantly sprouts new brands, technologies and trends. If you want to stay ahead, you can't stop learning. My interests go far beyond industry updates, I read a lot about leadership, psychology. Understanding how our brains work and why we react the way we do gives me that level-headedness you mentioned. If you know these things, you don't act on impulse, you think first.

Fourthly, generosity is a strategy. For me being generous with my ideas is the only way. When you share, you don't lose anything, you multiply what you have. You inspire the team, forming an environment of trust and creative cooperation where breakthrough solutions can emerge. My job as a leader is not to sit on my knowledge, but to be a catalyst for the growth of my team, since their success benefits both me and the company.

As a leader and as a person I learned to see challenges as opportunities, people as potential, knowledge as a tool for growth. And, of course, none of these principles will work if you don't love what you do and have no respect for those with whom you do it. In my case this love is fueled by magic of beauty industry.

You're both a hard worker and a true visionary. What do you think is more important for success in business these days? And what else you need to run beauty giant like LETOILE?

In my opinion, they should go together like two sides of the same coin. This is very evident in LETOILE. We



IT'S A PLEASURE TO CREATE BETTER LIFE FOR THOSE AROUND YOU

need vision to sense where the industry is heading, anticipate consumer desires, create that special emotional 'magic' around the brand. But impeccable execution requires hard work in establishing supply chains, achieving top-notch service at each of our numerous locations, training every consultant so that they don't just sell products but give well-informed and genuinely helpful advice. Hard work is the core of operational efficiency that allows us to maintain our famously low prices.

Also you need genuine empathy for clients and team members. The beauty business is based on trust, emotion and deep understanding of human nature. You have to really think about motivation for a consultant who works in a far-away northern city or concerns of a new mother looking for her first anti-aging cream. Courage to delegate is important but before that you have to surround yourself with people who share company's values, unite them over a common goal and empower them to be the best versions of themselves. Curiosity is also essential for moving forward.

Tell us about your self-made woman career journey. Where were you educated and to what extent has your formal education proved useful?

I graduated from Plekhanov University of Economics – one of Russia's leading universities, where I majored in Economics and Mathematics. It was a good education that developed my systemic thinking, helped me understand numbers and business processes, gave me solid foundation to build on. But practical experience is something you pick up as you go. I learned most valuable lessons not in classrooms, but

in stores, negotiating with brands, communicating with consultants and guests. Adapting to ever-changing beauty industry makes every day a school day.

So yes, formal education is essential. It's a very important tool to have if you want to succeed, but certainly not the only one. It doesn't guarantee anything. And it won't take you anywhere if you don't have – among other useful traits – a thirst for knowledge and high adaptability to change.

My story is not one of a sky-rocketing career that was built according to some plan. I just followed my passion but on the way I wasn't afraid to take responsibility or show initiative. I was always asking: "Why are we doing it this way?" "What if we try something different?" I didn't wait for opportunities, I took them, always doing more than was expected of me.

Over time I realized that we weren't just doing retail. We were making people beautiful, changing their perception of themselves, boosting their confidence. We were providing jobs and career opportunities for thousands of employees across the country. That changed my mindset from "business" to 'life's work'. I discovered the calling that made me strong and gave meaning to every day of my life.

What do customers appreciate the most about LETOILE? What are the keys to success and how you combine them?

The key to LETOILE's success is the ecosystem we've been building for years. In fact it's a whole key-chain based on a simple yet crucial principle: we don't just sell cosmetics and perfumes, we make beauty accessible and enjoyable for every woman.

We offer unparalleled value of affordable luxury, giving women — regardless of their income or location—the opportunity to enjoy the world's best beauty brands. Our loyalty program isn't just marketing; it's our way to show customer appreciation. We aim to make buying something from your favorite brand not a one-off holiday indulgence, but an affordable ritual.

Our assortment is extremely broad, versatile, and we have everything you can possibly want in every store. It's incredibly convenient. Whatever customers look for — latest Korean skincare, unique niche fragrance from legendary Olivier Cresp, a tried-and-true mascara, complex skincare product by Shiseido, they will surely find it in LETOILE, discovering something new in the process.

Our service is built on expertise and empathy. We invest extensive resources in training for our consultants because we regard them as our beauty ambassadors. The ideal LETOILE consultant is someone who listens, understands and offers the solution you need. Our 'master key' is customer-centricity at every level. We're not perfect, but we work every day to become better for our guests.

You've been leading LETOILE for nearly 15 years. How did you see the company in 2011, when you took the reins, how do you see it now, what would you like to see in the future?

I would say that by the time I joined the company, LETOILE had already established itself as the strongest and the most recognizable player in the market. But despite having good ties with brands, lots of regular customers and wide network, we lived by the rules of 'traditional retailer', focusing on operational efficiency, logistics and number of stores. We were selling beauty, but, to be honest, without much soul. The main challenge was to transform the company from a cosmetics shop, albeit huge and successful, into a friendly and welcoming beauty platform for millions of women, a place of inspiration, trust and discovery.

So we got to work. We made beauty experience with LETOILE seamless throughout all our channels. Customers begin their journey through the app, continue with in-store consultation and order their products online. We use technology — sophisticated analytics, automation, CRM systems as a tool to enhance human connection.

Most importantly we upgraded our service to the culture of care. Our consultants are experts

both in beauty and psychology, our managers are development partners. We've measured and honed the NPS (Net Promoter Score) because the happy customer is our most important KPI. They are at the center of all our processes. Whether we get an idea to introduce a new brand or add functions to our app, we ask ourselves: "Do our customers really need this? Will it make their life better?"

In 5-10 years I see LETOILE as a company that goes far beyond retail. I dream of collecting data on each and every customer — their preferences, skin type, even the climate of their region — to offer them 100% relevant selections. We will be investing even more in educational content because we want our customers to understand how products work, what is right for them, what goes well with what. We are also planning to broaden their LETOILE experience by combining beauty products with, for example, digital art. We strive to be with our clients at every stage of their lives — offering them their first ever cosmetics, perfect perfume for a date, safe products during pregnancy, anti-aging skincare much later. My greatest ambition is that in time, when a woman anywhere in the world thinks of beauty, she thinks of LETOILE — not as of the store but as of trusted life-long friend.

'LETOILE' means 'star' in French. Who or what is your personal guiding star?

Speaking honestly, for LETOILE and for me personally our client has always been and remains our guiding star. We are endlessly inspired by her needs, dreams and desires. Imagine a woman walking into our store. Whether she is having a tough day or getting ready for a date, she is our star. Everything we do is for the spark in her eyes, for her smile, to help her feel desirable and confident in her beauty. My inner guiding star is the belief that every person has a light in them, and leader's job is to make that light shine the brightest. I believe that every member of our colossal team possesses the unique talent, energy and potential. My role is to create the right environment for them to blossom. I feel energized every time I see a consultation or manager coming up with a brilliant idea because they are not afraid to make mistakes. This faith in people guides me through life and career. Together we create our very own LETOILE universe, where all of us—clients and team alike — help each other shine a little brighter. That's the real magic.



SURVIVAL SKILLS

HER LIFE AND CAREER WEREN'T ALWAYS SMOOTH SAILING. HOWEVER, MARY GUKASYAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, KRAFT HEINZ MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA, SKILLFULLY NAVIGATED ANY PITFALLS AND DEVELOPED HER OWN RULES, WHICH SHE GENEROUSLY SHARES WITH WE MAGAZINE READERS.

What were the three leadership decisions that influenced your career – and how can other women utilise those lessons?

Throughout my career, I made three key decisions that have shaped not only my path but also how I approach challenges and opportunities. Firstly, I embraced new challenges by moving across countries and regions, remaining flexible and open to opportunities that pushed my comfort zone and built resilience. Secondly, I prioritized my personal life when it mattered most. Especially when I became a mother, I recognized that leadership also involves honouring your own journey. Lastly, I committed to staying current with technology and global changes, continuously learning and adapting to change. For women leaders, these lessons demonstrate that courage, balance, and curiosity are powerful tools for authentic growth while leading with purpose.

Have there been moments when breaking the rules or your own playbook opened new doors for you?

I've never believed that leadership should be confined by strict rules. It is a personal journey, and each of us writes our own story. My approach is based on authenticity: recognising every colleague as a unique individual, giving them the attention they deserve, and maintaining contact across all levels of the company, from factory workers to senior management. I've learned that overcommunicating promotes clarity and admitting "I don't know" builds trust. It's in these moments of genuine honesty that doors have opened the widest, because true leadership emerges when people feel trusted, valued, heard, and motivated to succeed together.

What's one habit or principle that has helped you overcome the toughest leadership challenges?

The principle that guided me through the toughest leadership challenges is to stay focused on what you are meant to do, without being distracted by the noise around you.

If you could share one 'survival skill' for women leading in global business today, what would it be?

It would be resilience—always paired with positive thinking. Challenges will come in many forms, but what defines us is how we respond to them. Resilience provides the strength and flexibility to keep moving forward, while optimism helps us see possibilities where others might see only barriers. Together, they create a mindset that turns setbacks into opportunities for growth. This balance of strength and positivity not only sustains us through tough times but also inspires those around us to keep striving with courage and hope.





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A Key Role

ALINA NAZAROVA, HEAD OF THE BEST PRIVATE BANKING IN RUSSIA (FORBES MAGAZINE 2025), TALKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY IN THE PREMIUM SEGMENT AND WHAT VALUES REALLY MATTER TO A-CLUB CLIENTS.



You are the head of A-Club, a closed business community for high-net-worth clients and their families. Your main priority is people and the opportunity to create something unique for them. We would like to talk about the project "Conversations Among Friends", which unites and helps your clients and their children build a dialogue on the topic of professional realization. Please tell us more about this project.

We felt the need to create a space for discussions specifically with the younger generation of our clients. Many A-Club families raise issues of succession, career choice, and value formation, and these conversations often lack outside expertise and inspiration. Therefore, we decided to launch the project as a regular event — and "Conversations Among Friends" was born. During the project's first year, we held meetings with leading professionals in various fields: journalism, blogging, gaming, artificial intelligence, film, and other fields that are particularly interesting to young people today. A key feature of the meetings is their intimate format. This allows participants not only to listen to experts but also to ask questions, share concerns, and explore topics directly related to their future.

Experience has shown that such meetings help parents and children better understand each other and also open up new horizons for young people.

When we talk about modern technologies, what do you consider important to integrate into premium banking capabilities? How do you use AI, and where do you consider human employees irreplaceable?

AI is deeply integrated into the bank's processes. It helps us analyze large data sets, offer clients personalized financial solutions, anticipate their needs, and ensure transaction security in real time. Predictive analytics — the ability to anticipate a client's needs even before they formulate them — is crucial in private banking. This is where technology plays a key role.

However, when it comes to private banking, artificial intelligence cannot replace personal interaction. Our financial advisors are sensitive to the nuances of communication. Trust and personal engagement are critical in relationships with clients with high income — this is what creates a unique atmosphere that no technology can replicate. We use AI as a tool to free our employees from routine tasks, allowing them to focus on what matters most: human contact and creating personalized solutions for clients.

A female manager in the banking sector is not a rarity, but a good tone. What exactly can a woman bring to work with a high-income community?

I believe that women, in particular, bring a special quality to working with wealthy clients. This includes, first and foremost, attention to detail, empathy, and the ability to build long-term, trusting relationships.

Women are more likely to focus not only on numbers and results, but also on the client's atmosphere, values, and emotional comfort. In the premium segment, where clients expect not only professionalism but also a special level of care, these qualities are especially in demand.

Furthermore, women often possess a systemic yet flexible perspective. In A-Club, we are able to combine a strategic approach with a keen understanding of human relationships. This allows us to build a dialogue with clients and their families, not only as investors or entrepreneurs, but also as individuals with feelings, dreams, hopes, and of course plans for the future generation.

TRUST AND PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT ARE MAIN FOR A-CLUB

15 Minutes with Mona Ataya

WE ASKED MONA ATAYA, FOUNDER OF THE MUMZWORLD PLATFORM AND CO-FOUNDER OF BAYT.COM, IF SHE ONLY HAS 15 MINUTES TO PITCH HER BUSINESS, WHAT WOULD SHE DO.



PHOTO: ARCHIVE OF PRESS SERVICES

- 1** Craft your core message (2-3 mins). Clearly define your value proposition – what problem you are solving, for whom, and why your solution is unique.
- 2** Outline your key points:
 1. The problem and its significance.
 2. The solution and how it works.
 3. The target market.
 4. The business model and revenue streams.
 5. Your traction to date of proof of concept.
 6. Your ask (funding, partnerships, support, etc).
- 3** Highlight your Unique Advantage (2-3 mins)? Identify what differentiates you from competitors – your unique value, tech, team or market insights.
- 4** Practice a quick delivery. Rehearse your opening and closing lines. Ensure clarity, confidence and enthusiasm.
- 5** Have one slide or an abridged pitch deck to illustrate your pitch visually. Keep it simple.
- 6** The most important is to stay authentic, concise and focused. You should not be 'selling,' rather using passion, clarity and conviction to share your dreams with others.

MONA ATAYA ABOUT SPECIFIC MINDSET THAT HAVE HELPED HER OVERCOME GENDER CHALLENGES AND SUCCEED AS A WOMAN LEADER IN HER INDUSTRY

- **Embrace Authenticity and Confidence.** I've learned that being true to myself and embracing my unique perspectives has been crucial. Confidence isn't about knowing everything but about trusting my abilities and standing firm in my values. This authenticity fosters trust and respect.
- **Cultivate Resilience and a Growth Mindset.** Challenges and gender biases are inevitable, but viewing setbacks as opportunities to learn and grow is key. Resilience has allowed me to navigate obstacles with determination and a growth mindset keeps me open to continuous learning and adaptation.
- **Build a Supportive Network.** Surrounding myself with mentors, allies and a strong professional community has provided guidance, encouragement, and advocacy. Women leaders thrive when they have a support system that uplifts their ambitions and challenges stereotypes.
- **Prioritise Self-Care and Boundary Setting.** This is hard but important. Balancing work and personal life requires intentionality. Setting clear boundaries and taking time for self-care has kept me energized, focused and better equipped to lead effectively without burnout. This requires discipline.
- **Challenge the Status Quo and Lead by Example – even when the odds are stacked against you.** By challenging norms, taking the harder path, advocating for diversity, and mentoring other women, I am able to create a more inclusive environment – proof that women can lead with strength, grace and impact.

5 TIPS TO ACHIEVE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS

- 1. Be passionate about the problem you are solving and validate your idea early.** Ensure your vision will truly solve a meaningful need and create lasting impact. Don't just copy others.
- 2. Focus on Scalability metrics from day one.** Design your business model with scalability in mind and an achievable path to profitability. Focus on strong unit economics from the start – low margins or weak fundamentals will hinder growth long-term.
- 3. Build a Powerhouse Network.** Surround yourself with experienced entrepreneurs, mentors and advisors. Join accelerators and leadership groups to gain insights, funding and support.
- 4. Adopt a Zero Compromise Customer-First Mindset.** Businesses that prioritize customer experience and value are far more likely to thrive beyond short-term gains.
- 5. Maintain Financial Discipline.** Develop a robust and adaptable financial model early on. Consistently iterate, optimize and ensure your finances align with your growth objectives. Precision today paves the way to success later. Keep close track of cash flow and make data-informed decisions.

Breaking Language Barriers

NOUR AL-HASSAN'S JOURNEY TOOK HER FROM BEING A LAWYER TO DEVELOPING AI-BASED MACHINE TRANSLATION TOOLS.

My company, Tarjama&, focuses on language services for which we build AI solutions and technology. I started it with a few female employees working with me remotely – way before remote work became the new norm. We grew to more than 130 employees, including a 40-member AI team. I tapped into a network of highly educated women, and now we work with possibly the largest pool of female translators and linguists assisted by our proprietary technology.

In 2016, I took my first executive course. It was mostly focused on the future, AI in particular, and got me interested in technology. So I took a university course on AI. When I introduced the idea of developing CAT tools, everyone including in-house translators was like: 'Why?' Because traditional translation companies have no future. AI takes 80% of translator's work, leaving them with creative processes, critical thinking, prompt engineering – tasks where the

average translator has no role. You need to be better than the machine, have better research skills, writing techniques, paraphrasing abilities. So average translator goes into extinction. If you can't offer clients high quality, quick turnaround and low price – and you can't do all three without technology – they won't come to you.

First I launched Ureed, a program for freelancing. Then came CleverSo – a translation management system. It improves efficiency, provides terminology, checks machine translations for errors and repetitions, secures data and information preservation. The main thing we're looking into now is how to integrate large language models into our workspace and business model, make AI work with humans to produce the best quality. We still believe that the human role is crucial, despite all the hype on large language models' capabilities. No matter what you want to build, human feedback in the loop can't be replaced.



PHOTO: ARCHIVE OF PRESS SERVICES

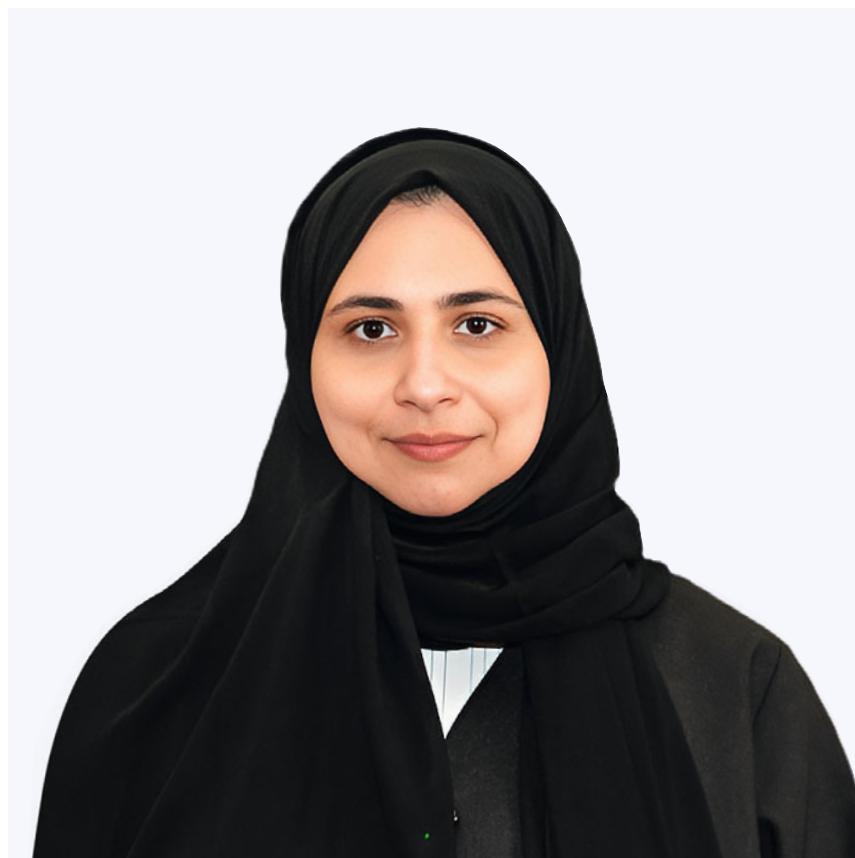
Dare to Innovate

YASMIN AL ENAZI IS A ROBOTICS ENGINEER, TECH ENTREPRENEUR, AND REGIONAL LEADER IN AI INNOVATION. SHE IS AMONG THE TOP 10 GLOBAL WOMEN SHAPING THE ROBOTICS INDUSTRY, AS LISTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ROBOTICS. AS HEAD OF WOMEN IN AI MENA REGION, ACTIVE IN 152 COUNTRIES, SHE CONTINUES WITH HER MISSION TO CREATE IMPACT-DRIVEN TECHNOLOGIES.

Even as we integrate AI into our workflows, strong/soft skills, strategic planning, emotional intelligence and clear communication remain foundational for productivity. AI's real value lies in how we adapt it not only for corporate efficiency, but to advance social responsibility. By managing repetitive tasks, multilingual communications, coordination, scheduling, and feedback analyses it frees our time for strategy, mentorship, and wellbeing. It's not replacing human connection, it's enhancing it.

In an AI-driven world soft skills like adaptability and people management are as essential as technical ones, but what matters most is how we anchor ourselves in one core domain and apply AI meaningfully within it. Business intelligence is also one of the top skills to invest in. **Understanding how to translate AI capabilities into strategic impact will define the next generation of female leaders.**

AI already touches every aspect of women's lives. We engage with it professionally, socially, emotionally, and ethically. So we must learn it, explore its tools, adapt to its evolution, shape its development to ensure fairness, inclusiveness, and diversity. Our vision must be embedded in the systems we build not as a footnote, but as a foundation. AI welcomes everyone who is willing to learn and contribute, regardless of gender, nation, race or religion. **Work of female leaders who dared to innovate, like Khawla Al Hammadi or Dr. Ebtisam Al Mazrouei, is a testament to what's possible when women lead with purpose in the age of AI.**



Things to Know When Launching an AI-Powered Business

JOLEEN LIANG, CO-FOUNDER OF SQUIRREL AI LEARNING AND CEO OF SQUIRREL AI NORTH AMERICA, SPEAKS ABOUT ALL THINGS AI THAT WE NEED TO KNOW.

1 START WITH A REAL PROBLEM, NOT THE TECHNOLOGY. AI is powerful, but it is not the starting point. Identify a human pain point that technology can truly address. Without this, even the most advanced algorithm will struggle to find value.

2 BELIEVE BEFORE OTHERS DO. In 2014, very few believed in the power of AI in education. Conviction matters. You often have to commit to the vision long before investors, users, or regulators recognize its potential.

3 BUILD TRUST EARLY. AI touches sensitive areas — education, health, finance. Trust is the currency that will determine adoption. Transparency in data use, clear communication, and ethical standards must be non-negotiable.

4 BALANCE AI WITH THE HUMAN TOUCH. AI should enhance — not replace — human relationships. In education, for instance, AI can personalize learning paths, which means the basic knowledge teaching should be replaced. But the role of teachers and mentors in providing empathy, motivation, and inspiration remains irreplaceable.

5 DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN "REAL AI" AND "FAKE AI." Too many so-called AI solutions are simply thin layers on top of large language models, offering generic outputs with little depth or accountability. Real AI in any vertical must be deep, data-rich, and interaction-driven, with enough history and specificity to deliver measurable results.

6 ADAPT TO REGULATION, DON'T RESIST IT. AI businesses will face fast-changing and often restrictive regulations. Instead of fighting them, learn to innovate within these boundaries — it will strengthen your resilience and credibility.

7 PREPARE FOR FINANCIAL HEADWINDS. AI is capital-intensive. There will be seasons when investor sentiment swings, or policies shift. Build a fi-

nancial buffer and diversify revenue streams to survive downturns.

8 INVEST IN DIVERSE TALENT. AI requires interdisciplinary teams: engineers, domain experts, data scientists, ethicists, and creatives. Diversity of thought is not optional; it is the engine of innovation.

9 PRIORITY EXPLAINABILITY. A "black box" system will always face resistance. Users and regulators alike need to understand how and why your AI makes decisions. Invest in interpretability early.

10 KEEP THE MISSION BIGGER THAN THE TECHNOLOGY. AI is a tool. The true legacy of an AI-powered business lies in its contribution to society — whether it is reducing inequality, improving access, or empowering the next generation.





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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

UNIVERSITIES CAN TEACH US ONLY AS MUCH – THE REST IS UP TO THE GREATEST OF TEACHERS, THAT IS, LIFE. WE CONVENTION SPEAKERS RECALL VALUABLE LESSONS THEY LEARNED IN THEIR STUDENT DAYS.





LUCY CHOW, Investor and Author recognized by Arabian Business as one of 50 Inspiring Female Business Leaders. She has degrees from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management Northwestern University and Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, the University of British Columbia, and Capilano University.

I am the first generation on both sides of my family to attend university. We lived very frugally, but I didn't realize the full extent of my parents' sacrifice until I started my first job out of university. My dad revealed that my very small annual salary was more than he had ever made in a year, ever. And he raised three kids and single-handedly sponsored more than ten family members to become Canadian citizens over the years. That was one of my big 'aha' moments.



SONJA RAVIC VUCKOVIC, Founder of Lofi Legal, Head of Legal at Fincore Digital Ltd.

Legal knowledge alone won't make you successful. The future of law belongs to those who understand business, innovation, and how to think like entrepreneurs. If you're still stuck thinking contracts and courtrooms are enough, you're already behind. My advice? Learn how industries move. Study market trends. Build relationships beyond the legal world. That's how you stay ahead.



PIA ALONZO WURTZBACH-JAUNCEY, host, humanitarian and entrepreneur, crowned Miss Universe 2015. One of the Philippines' most celebrated advocates for humanitarian causes.

I studied at the Centre for Asian Culinary Studies in San Juan. At first I didn't know how to use a knife properly but when I start something, I really put my heart into it. I always wanted to have a food business of my own, because acting or modeling wasn't going to last forever, nor was I going to look like this all the time. I thought that eventually I would want to slow down, my priorities would start to change. I think it's smart to have businesses or other sources of income.



NAWAL EL MOUTAWAKEL, Olympic Champion in 400-meter hurdles, Vice President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In 1984 she became the first Moroccan, African, Arab and Muslim woman to win an Olympic gold medal. First Muslim woman elected to the International Olympic Committee.

I went to the United States to study at Iowa State University on a sports scholarship. In Morocco I had the opportunity to compete, but I often found myself first across the finish line without much effort. In the United States there were hundreds of girls who were better than me, so I had to push myself to the limit to earn a spot on the podium. Little by little, I earned my place on the university team. Then, as the competitions, I demonstrated that I had talent, that I wasn't just 'the little Moroccan girl,' and that my scholarship was truly deserved.

Mentorship at Scale

WE ASKED MAHDIS SCHUBERT AND TANJA STERNBAUER, CO-FOUNDERS OF THE FEMALE FACTOR, A GLOBAL COMMUNITY WITH A PURPOSE TO CLOSE THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP FOR A MORE EQUAL BUSINESS WORLD, HOW TO BUILD LADDERS, NOT JUST CLIMB THEM.

For both of us, mentorship was never merely a career boost. It was the moment someone recognised our strengths and potential long before we did, and encouraged us to aim higher. It was doors opening at the right time and connections to opportunities we hadn't previously known. These interventions didn't just accelerate our careers; they defined how we view success and how we aspire to lead.

That's why, when we built the female factor, we placed mentorship at its core. Instead of depending on chance encounters, we designed structures where women at various stages could consistently find support. From curated mentoring circles to peer-to-peer learning, we have observed how powerful it is when guidance becomes embedded in the system rather than a lucky break. Through our programs, every second woman experiences a tangible career leap – from securing investors to gaining promotions, from forming

friendships to stepping into new industries. The numbers speak for themselves because mentorship works. And because scale matters, we also collaborate with corporations to help them integrate mentorship into their own leadership development – ensuring that support isn't confined to individuals but woven into the company culture. And what inspires us most is witnessing the cycle continue. Many women who once joined as mentees now return as mentors, paying it forward. This ripple effect exemplifies real change: ladders that don't end with one person's success but multiply into new pathways for others.

Our belief is simple: leadership isn't about how far you climb, but about how many you bring along with you. **Here's our invitation:** If you're a leader, consider becoming a mentor and sharing your experience to help someone else grow. And if you're on the other side, don't wait until you feel 'ready'. Let others open doors for you.



PHOTO: GOLDENHOUR PICTURES

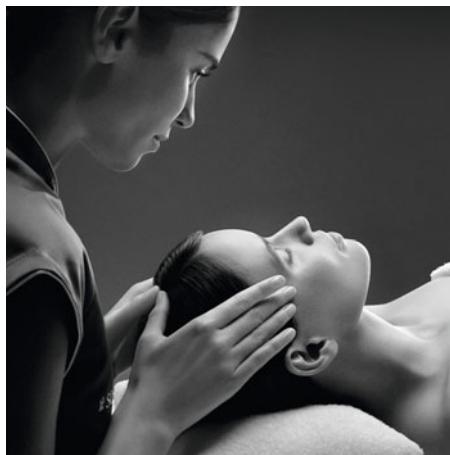
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Beauty as a Strategy for Success

FOR THOSE WHO THINK STRATEGICALLY AND VIEW BEAUTY AS AN ASSET, A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH IS ESSENTIAL. THAT'S WHY WE TALK ABOUT BEAUTY VISIONARIES LA BIOSTHÉTIQUE AND SOTHYS.



The modern businesswoman lives in a world of tight deadlines, international flights, and endless negotiations. Every morning, she must look flawless — regardless of how many hours of sleep she managed to get or how much stress she endured the previous day. Professional aesthetic treatments provide a cumulative effect, maintain the results of medical treatments, and create a long-lasting beauty that cannot be faked.

LA BIOSTHÉTIQUE: When Hair Declares Status

In 1948, a brand was founded in Paris, the first to declare that anti-aging care was needed not only for the skin but also for the hair. Thus began the La Biosthétique philosophy. Hair is the architecture of one's image and a reflection of one's status. But it doesn't become younger with age. It is exposed daily to the sun, heat styling, coloring, and harsh water. Maintaining its strength and beauty is possible only in the same way as maintaining the youthfulness of the skin — through regular care. La Biosthétique combines biochemistry and aesthetics, German precision and French elegance. Vitamins and

extracts penetrate deeper than conventional formulas allow. Fragrances deserve special attention: the brand collaborates with Geza Schoen, a renowned German perfumer whose work is distinguished by an avant-garde and unconventional approach.

SOTHYS: The French School Of Excellence

The year 1946 in France marked the starting point for the brand, whose name is now synonymous with professional luxury cosmetology. Sothys has remained a family business for 75 years, where generation after generation has carefully preserved its philosophy of quality, maintaining its headquarters, and laboratories in the heart of France. The secret to Sothys's success lies in its ability to combine natural ingredients and the achievements of science. Sothys is particularly proud of its own 'gardens', Les Jardins Sothys™ — a living laboratory for the study of plants. It is here that unique assets are born, which become exclusive ingredients in its formulas. The Sothys team collaborates with universities and experts to create innovative formulas that combine effectiveness, safety, and sensual textures.

She Built What the World Never Gave Women

FOR DECADES, THE WORLD GAVE MEN THEIR PRIVATE CLUBS, THEIR YACHT DECKS, THEIR CIRCLES OF STATUS.

FROM BUILDING HER FIRST BRAND AT THIRTEEN TO LEADING MULTIPLE VENTURES ACROSS EUROPE, DEMET ÖZER KEPT ASKING HERSELF: "WHY NOT US?"



Why can't women have a private world where beauty meets influence, where conversations become collaborations, and where presence itself becomes power?

That question became Migems – not a business idea, but a vision realized.

Why was Migems created?

For too long, exclusivity was something defined by men – golf clubs, cigar lounges, boardrooms. I wanted to build a space where women could experience the same sense of belonging, but through elegance, connection, gatherings and beauty rituals. Migems was born out of a simple truth: women deserve a world built for them, not just available to them.

What does Migems represent for women?

It represents freedom – the kind that doesn't need validation. Migems is a symbol of what happens when women stop seeking entry and start building their own circles. It is not about self-care, it's about self-worth. Here, women don't escape reality – they redefine it.

Why do women need a private society like Migems?

Because true power doesn't come from being seen – it comes from being understood. For centuries, men built their own circles to protect privilege, privacy, and influence.

Migems was created so women could finally have their own: a society where refinement meets power, and where beauty becomes a language of belonging.

It is not about isolation it's about elevation. Within Migems, women connect through ambition, grace, and legacy. They invest in themselves – not to impress the world, but to shape it.

What do you believe women really need most today?

A place where they can slow down without falling behind. Ambition is beautiful, but balance is sacred. I've learned that true success comes from moments of stillness, the time you give back to yourself. Whether it's reflection, ritual, or simply rest, that's not a luxury, that's leadership.

How does the energy around us shape who we become?

Everything changes when you enter the right circle.

From wellness sessions to défilés, branded soirées to themed gatherings – every moment at Migems is designed to shift your frequency. Because the truth is simple: you can't grow in rooms that drain you.

But when you enter one that feeds your soul, everything shifts – your posture, your purpose, your presence. And suddenly, you don't just feel beautiful. You feel inevitable.

Sweet Fall

A NEW MULTI-BRAND BOUTIQUE LITT IS OPENING IN DUBAI THIS FALL, PROMISING TO BECOME ONE OF THE REGION'S PREMIER FASHION DESTINATIONS.



The space's concept is based on the 'ready to look' principle: it features complete capsule wardrobes, where each look is pre-planned and curated by stylists. This means clients won't have to waste time choosing outfits — they can simply choose a ready-made set, and the look is complete.

The boutique LITT will be the first project of its kind in Dubai. It boasts a relaxed atmosphere, friendly service, and a carefully selected selection of brands, many of which are exclusive to the region. Among the announced brands are Giuseppe Di Morabito, Paris Texas, and Retrofête — brands that define the aesthetics of a new generation and set the tone for the global fashion scene.

The boutique's signature feature is its mix of recognizable global brands and 'secret' labels worn by Dua Lipa, Lady Gaga, Kendall Jenner, Hailey Bieber, and other global style icons. Here you'll find both evening dresses and relaxed everyday looks, and the carefully curated rails allow you to instantly see a complete wardrobe.

The boutique is conceived not only as a shopping destination but also as a cultural space. New event formats are planned here — dynamic, lively, with an emphasis on emotion and connection. This space is all about atmosphere, pleasure, and style.

The team promises to showcase the full spectrum of 2026 trends, from major global movements to key industry directions.

The items collected in the boutique reflect the central idea of the times: people need not just clothes, but ready-made solutions for life.

People Are the Soul

TINA GHAFURIAN, COO OF OMORFIA GROUP, AND LEILA SANII, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE GROOMING COMPANY, SHARE THEIR INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP, PEOPLE, AND CLIENTS - THREE PILLARS AT THE HEART OF OMORFIA'S JOURNEY.

"TRUE LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT BEING IN FRONT; IT'S ABOUT LIFTING OTHERS TO STAND BESIDE YOU, TO GROW WITH YOU, AND TO ONE DAY LEAD THEMSELVES."



"OUR PEOPLE STAY BECAUSE THEY FEEL THEY BELONG – BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEIR JOURNEY MATTERS, AND THAT THEIR DREAMS CAN GROW WITH US."

We perceive Omorfia as more than a network of beauty destinations, but as a symbol of home-grown innovation and empowerment, creating spaces that inspire confidence, growth, and connection. Please tell us about the leadership strategy you've built in your company.

Tina: For me, leadership has always meant creating pathways for others. The UAE has shown the world what visionary leadership looks like; courageous, inclusive, and focused on people. At Omorfia (the flagship beauty and wellness vertical of Multiply Group, an Abu Dhabi-based investment powerhouse and a proud part of the wider IHC ecosystem), we draw from that same philosophy. Our strategy is simple yet powerful: empower people to discover their own potential. True leadership is not about being in front; it's about lifting others to stand beside you, to grow with you, and to one day lead themselves. That's how we build not just successful brands, but legacies.

Working with employees, training, and creating the right, caring atmosphere are all important highlights of Omorfia's large business. Tell us how you've structured this work and how your employees respond.

Leila: Our people are the soul of everything we do. With such a diverse community (collectively, our brands serve over 500,000 loyal clients across 130+ locations, powered by a diverse team of 3,500 professionals), it is our responsibility to make every individual feel seen, heard, and supported. We've built a culture where training is not just about skills, but about growth and self-belief. Many of our team members start at entry-level roles and rise to become leaders, because we nurture ambition and celebrate resilience. The atmosphere is one of trust and care, and the response is extraordinary. Our employees stay because they feel they belong, and because they know their journey matters.

Developing a premium chain of 10 brands, you have a keen understanding of your clients. Tell us what kind of service, hospitality, and communication they expect.

Tina: Our clients are women and men who embody ambition. They are discerning, confident, and constantly evolving. What they seek is not just service, but connection. They want to feel valued, understood, and empowered every time they walk through our doors. For us, beauty is about how we make people more themselves.

Sugar Babe? Never Again!

MARIA GALABOVA IS THE FOUNDER OF KETO KARTEL, A PURVEYOR OF ARTISAN BREADS, LUXURY CAKES, AND PREMIUM CHOCOLATES. KETO KARTEL CAFÉ WAS BORN OUT OF MARIA'S PERSONAL JOURNEY TOWARD WELLBEING, EMBODYING HER DEDICATION TO USING CLEAN INGREDIENTS, THAT NURTURE BOTH BODY AND SOUL.



I know this cycle all too well. A few years ago, I remember my husband was working long hours and relying on sugar and caffeine to push through the day. But over time, I watched how it drained him instead of fueling him: constant fatigue, irritability, and health markers heading in the wrong direction. It was painful to see someone I love so full of potential being held back by something as simple as food choices. That was the turning point for both of us. We realized nutrition had to change, not through guilt or restriction, but through balance and smarter fuel.

When you fuel yourself with the right balance of protein, healthy fats, and clean energy, everything shifts. Food stops controlling you, and instead, it becomes your ally.

Here are two small changes that made a big difference for me and my family that you can try too:

• **Cut refined sugar completely.** It doesn't just cause weight gain – it creates constant cravings, bloating, and mood swings. Instead, try organic sweeteners such as monkfruit, which adds natural sweetness without the negative effects.

- **Remove gluten from daily meals.** Gluten can be surprisingly disruptive, causing inflammation, puffiness, and skin breakouts. There are lots of cleaner alternatives on the market such as almond flour that will make your digestion smoother and will not cause bloating.

Health is not an afterthought; it's the foundation of longevity, energy, and confidence. At Keto Kartel, this belief shapes everything we do. I founded the brand in Dubai in 2023 to create desserts that support a healthy lifestyle without compromising on taste. Now I satisfy my sweet tooth with a guilt-free keto snack that is also nourishing and good for you.

So the next time you reach for a quick fix, pause and ask yourself: is this fueling the life I want to build? When you choose real nutrition, you unlock the best version of yourself – in performance, in health, and in life.

As the saying goes: **"Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you who you are – because every bite is a step toward the life you're building."**

In case of humor

OLESYA IVANCHENKO, STAND-UP COMEDIAN AND ACTRESS, SHARES HOW SHE MAKES TIME FOR HERSELF AND USES HUMOR AS A REMEDY.



Olesya, we understand that you're often asked about the role of humor both in your life and in business, but who else should we ask about this if not you? In business, a good joke and a sense of humor can be useful, and in general, what kind of humor is appropriate in business communication?

I think humor is the best and most effective means of communication. But all the theory about it is pointless, in my opinion, because you should rely solely on intuition and your own natural sense of humor.

For many, humor is a remedy, a stress reliever. How do you rid off the stress? What helps you?
Walking, massage, meeting with people close to my soul.

It seems like your work schedule isn't exactly ideal in terms of work-life balance. What rules have you developed for yourself? For example, how do you end a workday that seemingly never ends?

Probably only this year have I learned to balance work and rest and choose myself more often. If I have a complex shooting or event, I always set myself a day off the next day. If we're flying somewhere on tour, I take the day before the event to recover and adapt. If I have free days, I don't put life on hold; I plan at least a mini-trip to change the scenery. It's in such little loopholes and loopholes that we live — and with great pleasure!

Who is your role model in business?

I don't think of myself as a businesswoman with a role model. Well, let it be Cleopatra!

**YOU SHOULD
RELY ON YOUR
INTUITION**

PAVING THE ROAD TO SUCCESS



WE CONVENTION SPEAKERS GUIDE READERS THROUGH THE FIRST STEPS AND IMPORTANT CROSSROADS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS.



JOELLE MARDINIAN, *Celebrity & Entrepreneur*

If you want to be an entrepreneur, make sure that you are willing to sleep less and skip mealtimes because work is going to take a lot of time. Be willing to invest money and know that the investment might not come back to you for at least two to three years. You will have to stay on top of your game, get into the smallest things and the biggest things, be a good leader to your team. You can't ask them to work hard while you are doing nothing. I think a great leader is someone who honestly leads the way, giving energy, motivation and inspiration to the team.



LYNN AL KHATIB, *Executive Coach & Vice President of Communications, Chalhoub Group*

In luxury, communication is about understanding people as much as understanding the business. You need to know your data, follow behaviors, and read the trends, but none of it works without emotional intelligence. You have to feel the brand, its history, and its legacy. Luxury is built on family, stories, and relationships that stand the test of time.

This job isn't about crafting perfect press releases. It's about storytelling with meaning and helping others shine, the founders, the brands, the teams. That's when communication becomes a real act of leadership.



AMBAREEN MUSA, *CEO GCC, Revolut*

Persistence is everything – especially as an entrepreneur. You'll hear 'no' far more often than 'yes', face countless hurdles, and sometimes feel like you're moving backwards. But the truth is, every challenge teaches you something valuable. Being persistent means staying curious, asking why until you get to the real answer, and refusing to give up when things get hard. It's what turns ideas into impact. Without persistence, you simply can't build anything that lasts.



SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA, *Tennis Player, Four-Time Grand Slam Champion, Entrepreneur*

It's hard to start a career in a new field because you are competing with established professionals. But I wanted to get into sports fashion, so I thought – why not give it a try? Of course, skeptics are always there, but I learned to ignore them throughout the course of my tennis career. And I just go for it.

If you start going, you are already halfway to success. For the rest you will need knowledge, determination, and hard work. Connections in a new field – that I fortunately had – help a great deal. I see a fresh perspective and a seasoned athletic character as my advantages. Sport taught me to never give up. There's always a chance to win.

Forever in Me

A TWO-TIME GRAND PRIX FINAL ALL-AROUND MEDALIST... BUT BEHIND THE AIRINESS OF RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS STAND MONTHS OF PAIN AND UNCERTAINTY. STARTING A NEW LIFE OUTSIDE OF SPORTS, LYASAN UTIASHEVA SHARES HER LESSONS OF COURAGE.



You retired from sports quite a while ago and found yourself in a completely different field. Looking back on your journey, what was more difficult in terms of adaptation, emotional stress, and decision-making — sports or what you decided to do after sports?

In sports, everything is really clear: there's a goal, there's training, there's a result. You know why you get up at five in the morning, why you endure pain, why you deny yourself so much. But sports end, and that's when the hardest part begins — life without a script where there's no coach, no judges, and you're the only one making decisions. In television and new projects, the rules are much more subtle here — they're not always obvious. And this freedom, which seems like a gift, is actually a challenge. In sports, I had a medal as an end point, but here there's no end point. You have to learn to be flexible, and sometimes vulnerable.

What aspects of your athletic mentality have remained with you to this day, and which have you been forced to forget/soften/change?

Discipline and the ability to work hard are things that have always been with me. I'm used to not waiting for the perfect moment, but trying and moving forward. Sport taught me to be strict with myself, and that's not always necessary in life. It's more important to allow yourself rest, give yourself time, and be gentle. I'm learning to accept imperfections, be flexible, and live not only in the result but also in the process. This gives me freedom and joy.

How easily do you get involved in new projects, especially those that involve something you've never done before? How do you deal with fears and doubts?

Every new project is always a step into the unknown. Of course, there's anxiety, but I've learned to perceive it not as a hindrance. [It's] a sign that an important experience lies ahead. Fear isn't an enemy; it simply reminds me: "You're in new territory." When I try, trust, and move forward, life always rewards me with gifts. And I believe: every project, every meeting is given to us for a reason — they become part of our inner book.

Stay Grounded

SIKANDER AZIZ, PARTNER AT AEON & TRISL REAL ESTATE BROKER L.L.C., SPEAKS ABOUT EARNING A CLIENT'S TRUST AND BECOMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THEIR JOURNEY.



What do you find most challenging and most enjoyable about communicating with clients?

One of the most challenging yet rewarding aspects of my role is understanding the diverse needs of clients and managing their expectations effectively. Every client comes with a unique set of goals, preferences, and pain points. Navigating these differences requires active listening, empathy, and the ability to communicate clearly and transparently. It's not just about meeting expectations, but aligning with them early and consistently delivering value that resonates. This dynamic keeps me sharp and continuously pushes me to adapt and improve.

What I find most enjoyable is building strong, trust-based relationships that lead to long-term partnerships and mutual success. There's something deeply satisfying about earning a client's trust and becoming a strategic partner in their journey. These relationships often go beyond business transactions — they're built on credibility, reliability, and a shared vision for growth.

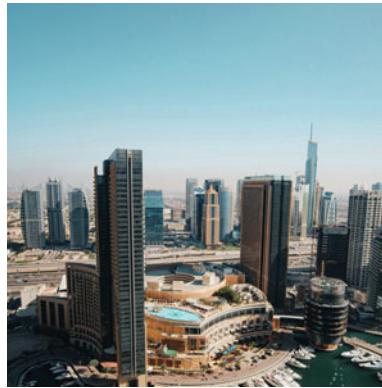
You're said to be a talented negotiator and able to persuade anyone. But you've probably also

encountered rejection. How do you respond to this effectively and ultimately tip the scales in your favor?

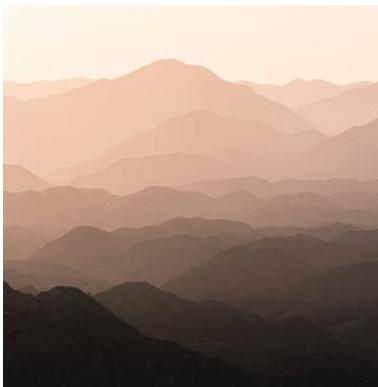
Rejection is an inevitable part of the process, but I've learned to view it as a learning opportunity rather than a setback. I approach objections with patience, active listening, and a problem-solving mindset. Understanding the root cause of a client's hesitation often opens doors to new ideas or more tailored solutions. **Persistence, empathy, and adaptability allow me to turn rejections into future opportunities and foster more meaningful engagement.**

What inspires you most about your work?

What drives me professionally is a passion for innovation and continuous learning. I'm energized by the opportunity to solve complex problems, contribute to client success, and evolve alongside a rapidly changing industry. Staying current and anticipating trends are key motivators that keep me passionate and forward-focused.



SEE DUBAI THROUGH MARIE-LOUISE EK' EYES





SHE LEADS HILTON'S HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION AND DRIVES THE COMPANY'S AWARD-WINNING PEOPLE AND CULTURE STRATEGY ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA. FOR WE MAGAZINE MARIE-LOUISE EK SHARES PLACES IN DUBAI THAT SUIT HER MOOD, HELP HER RESTORE AND EASE HER ROUTINE.

MY PLACE FOR A RUN: Jumeirah Islands. The nature is diverse, I love looking at the houses and the refurbs, and the fact that you run along the water just adds to the feeling of being in nature.

MY PLACE FOR RELAXATION: riding my bike around my neighborhood. I live in The Springs, the area has many kilometers of lakes to cycle around.

MY PLACE FOR A FUN BRUNCH: I recently went to The Maine in JBR, great DJ and singers and yes dancing. The chefs deliver a delightful menu as well.

MY PLACE FOR SHOPPING: I really do most of my purchases online, but if I need to go to a mall I prefer Marina Mall (and combine it with an outdoor lunch amongst the marina high rises) or go old school with Mall of the Emirates.

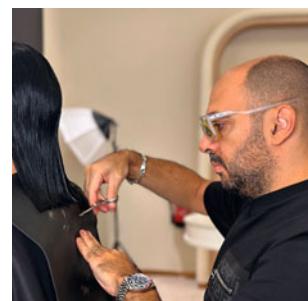
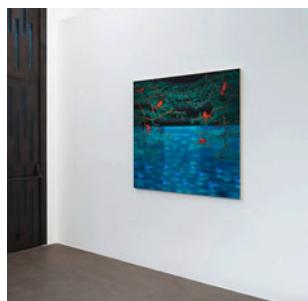
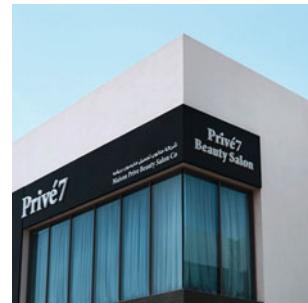
MY PLACE FOR A NIGHT ON THE PALM: Waldorf Astoria. Always nice combo of food, drinks, pool and sea. As well as morning runs along the walkway on the Palm.

MY HIDDEN GEM: the top-floor bar at Hilton JBR. It has been around for a long time and offers amazing views.

MY PLACE FOR GETTING OUT OF THE CITY: Hiking at Shawka Dam. Gives you a great start with a steep staircase that gives you a fantastic view of the mountains.

See Dubai through Rosemin Opghenaffen's Eyes

SHE IS ENTREPRENEUR, LUXURY STRATEGIST (A TRAILBLAZER IN THE MIDDLE EAST'S LUXURY EVOLUTION) AND INFLUENTIAL MEDIA PERSONALITY. «I HAVE BEEN IN DUBAI FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS AND IT'S TRULY HOME FOR ME», SHE SAYS. PLEASE CATCH ROSEMIN OPGENHAFFEN'S PERSONAL TAKE ON DUBAI.



MY BEAUTY BLACK BOOK:

Hair: **Jacques La Coupe** (Dubai Marina)

Best colorist
&

Nails: **Prive 7**

ART GALLERIES:

Check out the whole **Alserkal Avenue**

And **Leila Heller gallery** (She has in NY as well)

I always find something special and beautifully curated.

TO EAT:

Best Italian in the city:

Il Borro, Jumeirah Al Naseem Hotel
&

For breakfast:

Tashas, Al Jalila, AlWasl Road

HOTELS:

I love the beach and restaurants in all the Jumeirah Hotels.

But you can definitely find me at **Jumeirah Al Naseem** or **Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab**.

Paramguru: in Pursuit of Peace

HIS HOLINESS PARAMGURU MAHARAJ IS A TRULY EXTRAORDINARY BEING WHO EMBODIES SANĀTANA DHARMA — THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLES AND DUTIES THAT FORM THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF ALL HINDUS. HE HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO LEARNING AND SERVING OTHERS, STRIVING TO EASE HUMAN SUFFERING.



Paramguru Maharaj teaches that humanity suffers because it has turned away from nature, allowing the mind to become dangerously imbalanced. Having acquired profound knowledge in yogic sciences, sacred scriptures, and Ayurveda, His Holiness brought this wisdom to Europe to bridge the gap between nature-inspired ancient practices and modern science and technology.

He has collaborated with numerous scientists, delivered lectures at more than 50 universities, authored over 30 books, and trained more than 100,000 students worldwide.

Paramguru Maharaj is the founder of three remarkable institutions. Through Divinom Healing, he integrates the powers of spirit and science to restore health and inner peace. At the Ultra Billionaire Club (UBC), he guides the world's most influential leaders to achieve balance across the four pillars of life: Wisdom, Health, Relationships, and Wealth. His Sevarth Foundation has led large-scale humanitarian campaigns to support widows in West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand — women unjustly blamed for their husbands' deaths and cast out of their homes. The foundation also runs educational programs for children in villages and rural communities.

Regarded as one of the greatest Indian Gurus of the 21st century, His Holiness continues to inspire individuals and institutions through his unwavering commitment to love, learning, and humanitarian service-affirming that “the pursuit of peace ends in the service of others.”

LECTERA: Good to Know

8 MILLION LEARNERS IN 5 YEARS? YES, IT'S POSSIBLE. LET'S LEARN HOW A CRISIS-BORN STARTUP REDEFINED GLOBAL EDUCATION.

The Lectera logo consists of the word "Lectera" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. To the right of the "e" is a red graphic element resembling a stylized 'L' or a three-dimensional block.

Back to 2020. The world stood still. A global pandemic brought borders down, stalled economies, and clouded futures. It was the worst possible time to launch a new business — and exactly when most people were retreating, Mila Semeshkina and a small team of visionaries stepped forward. What emerged was Lectera, an international EdTech platform built not in calm, but in crisis. It wasn't a safe bet. It was a bold, deliberate risk — and one that paid off. The market needed answers. Lectera offered a solution.

BUILT IN THE FIRE

While Lectera was developing its first multilingual product, the world was still on pause. The company's Dubai headquarters seemed, at the time, more like a dot on a disconnected map. A small, scattered team — spread across 19 countries — had to build fast, remotely, and under pressure. But one thing was clear: Lectera wasn't just innovative. It was urgent. The need for

accessible, relevant knowledge had exploded, and Lectera met the moment — not by slowing down, but by accelerating. The startup didn't just survive the chaos — it turned it into momentum. From the earliest stages, the product was forced to adapt, pivot, and stay ahead of change. This pressure forged what Lectera is today: a platform built for the future of learning, and born of one of the most uncertain times in recent history.

FAST EDUCATION. REAL SKILLS. NOW

Lectera's core isn't just digital content. It's a philosophy: Fast Education. A method Mila Semeshkina developed over ten years — one that strips away everything unnecessary and focuses on real, applicable skills.

Forget hours of lectures. Each course is a concentrated sequence of 7 to 11 micro-lessons, each just 5-8 minutes long. No fluff. No filler. Just practical tools — ready to use in real life, from day one.

The platform spans essential fields: marketing, business, soft skills, financial literacy, future careers, and women's leadership. All courses are available in 15 languages, constantly updated by a global team of experts, and fully downloadable for offline access. This is learning that fits into your life — not the other way around.

FROM 50 TO 250+ EXPERTS, AND COUNTING

From a lean team of 50, Lectera has grown into a network of over 250 specialists across industries and geographies. The company has launched over 100 new courses only in 2024 — including free programs in soft skills and business for those facing urgent life changes.

Lectera also partners with global names like Grintern, Trivago, English First, and the International Academy of Management, bringing its content into corporate learning environments and team development strategies worldwide.

LEARNING AT THE SPEED OF LIFE

Every month, over one million students around the world log in to Lectera to learn faster, smarter, and on their own terms. More than 50,000 people study daily, mastering new skills through concise, practice-oriented

courses that fit seamlessly into real life. At the heart of Lectera lies AI-driven personalization, technology that analyzes each learner's goals, recommends the right path, and keeps every course aligned with the latest global trends.

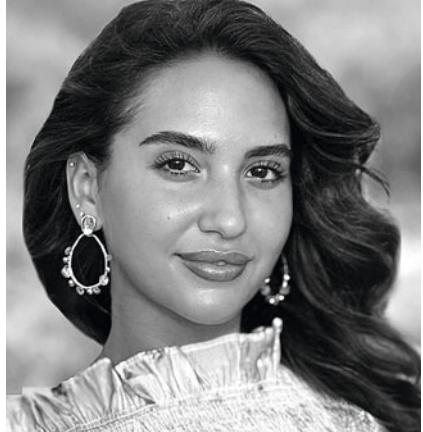
But Lectera is not just about learning. It is about transformation. Every course is available in up to 15 languages, allowing learners to revisit subjects in multiple tongues, strengthen professional vocabulary, and advance both their careers and language fluency. The Lectera.com Blog, a vibrant media space filled with expert insights and powerful life hacks, extends this experience beyond the classroom and turns curiosity into continuous growth and inspiration.

EMPOWERING WOMEN, TOGETHER

Since 2023, Lectera has partnered with the WE Council and the WE Convention to advance a shared mission of making knowledge accessible and transformative for all. Together, they empower a global community of women to lead with skill, intelligence, and vision. Members of the WE Council and participants of the WE Convention enjoy free access to a range of courses on women's empowerment, leadership, and personal growth. Through this collaboration, Lectera reaffirms its belief that education, when fast, relevant, and inclusive, can truly change lives and inspire every learner to turn potential into progress.

**“LECTERA WAS BUILT FOR THIS
NEW WORLD — NOT JUST TO
SURVIVE CHANGE, BUT TO DRIVE IT.”**

**MILA SEMESHKINA,
LECTERA'S FOUNDER & CEO**



TO
LEAD
WITH
CONFIDENCE

WECONVENTION SPEAKERS SHARE THEIR VIEWS ON
LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY, AND WAYS TO BEAT
IMPOSTER SYNDROME.



IPHIGENIA VON MOOCK-TSIPAS, founder and CEO of PhiThea™ – unique coaching and advisory platform – empowering female founders and executives to break barriers, and lead with clarity and purpose.

PhiThea™ is a human-centric coaching and advisory platform empowering female founders and executives to break barriers, accelerate growth, and lead with confidence, clarity, and purpose. Through tailored coaching, micro-consulting sessions, and science-based leadership tools, PhiThea™ helps women turn complexity into clarity and potential into performance. In a world defined by AI, digital acceleration, and global uncertainty, leadership demands more than agility – it requires self-awareness, strategic insight, and authentic confidence. By bridging strategy and humanity, PhiThea™ equips leaders to navigate transformation with foresight, resilience, and impact – because the future of leadership is deeply human.



LUCIE LACHAUX, ex-CFO and founder of Changing Minds™, is a private advisor to senior executives. She helps leaders recalibrate their thinking, sharpen decisions, and unlock aligned success in business and life.

My advisory work focuses on decision-making, strategic clarity, and mental performance – because when leaders evolve how they think, they don't just grow their business. They change how they live, lead, and make an impact.



ZAINAB KUFAISHI, independent consultant, investment leader and advisor, recognized by Forbes as one of the Middle East's power businesswomen.

Successful leaders are long-term strategic thinkers able to make hard decisions. They lead by example with integrity, high ethical standards, and great communication skills. If you want to be a leader, practice active listening and listen intently. It is important to surround yourself with brave and diverse voices who can of course correct you if need be. This only comes if you have created a safe psychological space for the team to speak up, as well as an 'owner's mindset'. The latter is key to winning and ensures that everyone contributes equitably.



SARA ALWARI, content creator & influencer with over 14 million followers across TikTok and Instagram. A certified dietitian, she is also an ISSA-certified personal trainer.

I've built my platforms to reflect confidence, wellbeing, and purposeful living. My goal has always been to inspire women to embrace both elegance and strength – finding balance between ambition and grace.

Through my content, I share pieces of real life – fashion, fitness, beauty, and travel – all tied together by honesty and intention. To me, true empowerment isn't about perfection; it's about growth, self-worth, and the courage to stay authentic in a world that constantly tells you to be otherwise.

Alongside my husband, Ghaith Marwan, I continue to create stories that celebrate creativity, partnership, and resilience. At the heart of everything I do is a simple belief: influence means responsibility – and using that responsibility to make others feel seen, capable, and inspired.



MICHELLE RAYMOND, Leadership Strategist and HR Futurist. Founder of The People's Partner and co-founder of Techsoma.me and FindExperts.me, a tech and executive mentoring platform that connects organizations to expert talent. Founder of the Diverse Business and Tech Summit.

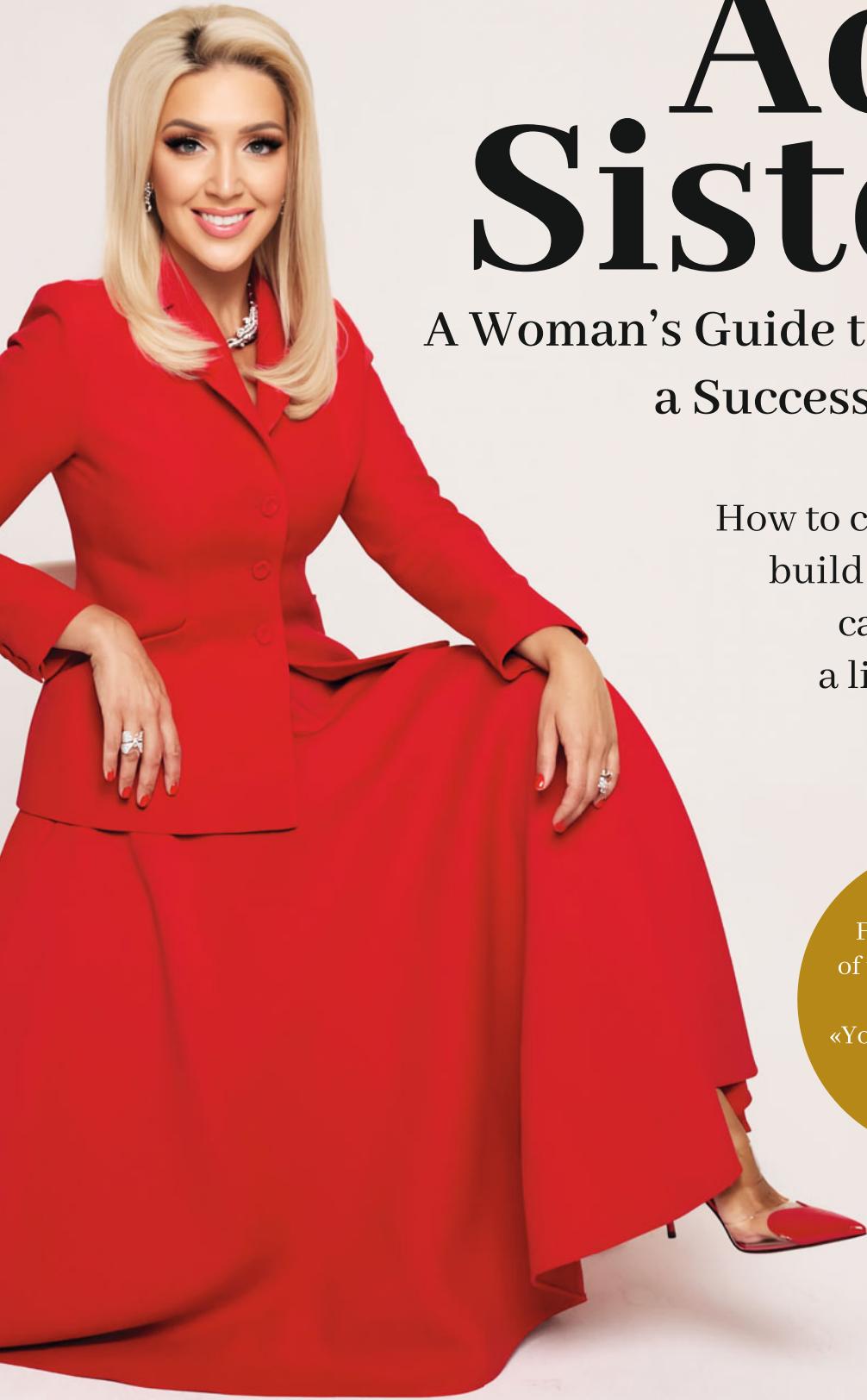
There are strategies that help women in leadership positions beat the imposter syndrome. First, reframe your interactions. Remove yourself from a person who goes "Oh, my God, I have to ask for this", or "I don't know what clients or coworkers will say or think", or "I am scared of rejection", and become someone who makes a list of all their wins, presents it to them, and then negotiates so you can win as well. Try to find out more about people, ask questions, and listen in order to bring back the solution they are looking for. Second, detach your emotions. When we create a product or a service, we are so invested as if it's our baby. So when somebody rejects it, it's like a knife to the heart. Don't see the product as yours, see it as something that other people need. You are there as a conduit. When you move away from the product and into the minds of clients, you sell better and don't feel guilty if they don't buy. And third – don't be afraid to ask for more. We don't think or dream big because we are scared: "If I say that and it don't happen, what will I look like to the world?" I dare you to be different, to feel deserving of every good thing that comes into your life.

MILA SEMESHKINA

Act, Sister!

A Woman's Guide to Building
a Successful Career

How to create success,
build a meaningful
career, and live
a life you love —
as a woman



From the author
of the international
bestseller
«Your Million-Dollar
Career»

ACT, SISTER!

MILA SEMESHKINA, PRESIDENT & FOUNDER OF THE WE CONVENTION, INTRODUCES HER NEW BOOK.

While working on my new book, I already knew that I wanted its first readers to be those gathered at the WE Convention. This third book has become the most important for me and, at the same time, the most difficult to write. The remarkable women who will speak on our stage, connect in the corridors, and sit in the audience, have all been my inspiration. That is why, although the official release of the book will take place in March next year, the guests of the WE Convention will be the first to see it now.

This book is the result of many years of work during which I tried to find an answer to one essential question: why is it often more difficult for women to achieve self-realization than for men? *Act, sister!* is not just a collection of experiences but a beacon that sheds light on the hidden shoals of women's success and helps to navigate them. It is also the result of thousands of interviews, consultations, and conversations with women of diverse professions and backgrounds — from participants of my programs such as *Career for a Million*, to distinguished leaders who have appeared on the WE Convention stage, and members of the WE Council. On every page of this book are the experiences of many women — their stories, unique strategies, and success formulas ready to be applied.

Having studied a vast range of historical sources and analyzed numerous works of fiction, monographs, and historical treatises, I have finally come to

understand why this world still seems so "male" to us — and what can be done about it. Therefore, the book consists of two parts. The first part serves as a theoretical foundation, where we explore the historical and cultural roots of the "male world" and become aware of our own limitations. The second part is, of course, practical. It offers a full set of tools to help you achieve your career goals: professional guides, proven checklists, techniques, and powerful exercises developed by me based on my own experience and that of many outstanding experts. These insights once helped me become who I am today. With them, you will build your own roadmap, outline your career for decades ahead, define all the key milestones — and, most importantly, start taking action.

**THIS BOOK IS THE
RESULT OF MANY
YEARS OF WORK**

Things WE Value the Most

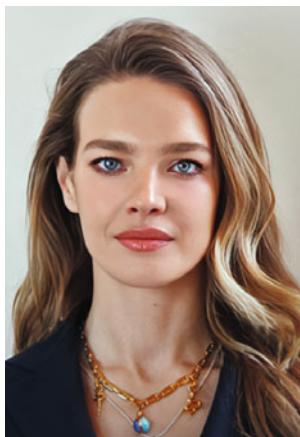
WORLD-RENNOWNED SPEAKERS OF 2023 AND 2024 WE CONVENTIONS RETURN WITH WORDS OF WISDOM AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THOSE WHO SEE THEM AS THEIR ROLE-MODELS.

MAYE MUSK,
world-renowned
dietitian, model,
entrepreneur &
bestselling author



You can be in such a dark hole that you don't know what you want. And you've got to climb out of it by making lists. Why are you depressed? What do you want to change? Then you start making changes and letting people know that you're relevant, intelligent, educated, talented. You may be artistic. You may have some degrees that you don't use. Let the world know about your goals. We have the great advantage of social media to show what we're like, how good we are at a certain topic.

NATALIA VODIANOVA,
supermodel,
philanthropist, impact
investor



There is a story of a professor who gave balloons to hundreds of students and said, 'Write your name on it.' He threw the balloons in one room: 'You have five minutes to find yours.' Do you think anyone found it? Of course not. Then he said, 'Now pick up any balloon and give it to the person whose name is on it.' In five minutes everybody got their balloons. It tells us that if we pursue only our own happiness, we often can't find it. But if we help others to become happier, we find our happiness on the way.

DELPHINE BELLINI,
CEO of *Maison Schiaparelli*



I believe that in life it's important to follow intuition and strong convictions. It's not easy. Nothing is guaranteed. But if you believe in what you do, and manage to form a team that share your values and convictions, everything is possible. Don't be afraid to follow your convictions and intuition even if they take you to the road that is different from the others.

MARIA SHARAPOVA,
world class tennis
champion and
entrepreneur



It's important to recognize that challenges are part of the journey that everyone has, no matter the profession. Everyone goes through ups and downs. You have to stay resilient, to understand that sometimes your return on investment doesn't happen overnight, that it takes time to see the fruits of your labor grow and reward you. But it's also important to lean into who you are, to be authentic to yourself. Approach shifts and changes in your life with curiosity and desire to learn because you never know where your knowledge might take you.

**HER HIGHNESS
SHEIKHA DR. SHAM-
MA BINT MOHAM-
MED BIN KHALID AL
NAHYAN,
Chairperson of the
Board of Directors,
Sheikh Mohammed
bin Khalid Al Nahyan
Cultural and Educa-
tional Institutions**



Citizenship is not just a term that defines the relationship between people and their homeland; it is their rights provided by the state as well as their duties towards it. Balancing this relationship establishes a sense of belonging and loyalty, which is not limited to time or place.

Wherever you are, the belonging and love for your country remain unchanged.

**CARLA BRUNI,
singer, songwriter**



My view of love didn't change, what changed was the importance I've been giving to love, because when I was younger, I thought there were more important things. I know now that love is the center of life for every human being. I'm not only talking about the classic type of love, but every type – for your friends, parents, pets, garden. Just being in a loving mood is good for you. I advise young women today to leave a big room for love open, to believe in love, because life is better that way.

**HER HIGHNESS
SHEIKHA MOZAH
BINT MARWAN AL
MAKTOUN,
Captain Pilot of
Dubai Police Airwing,
author of children's
book "When she took
to the sky"**



**MERYEM UZERLI,
actress**



I believe literature, especially children's literature, can mold young minds to pursue their goals and passions with determination. It can introduce strong positive role models at an early age. And also serve as a reminder that young girls can dream big and do anything they set their mind to – just as so many women who did it before – because there is a vast world out there that awaits them. Storytelling inspires young women to not let themselves tire at obstacles but rather to persevere, fight them and emerge victorious.

The best advice I've ever received was simple: "Listen to your heart". Of course, we are always in doubt what are we really listening to – our heart, our fears or longing, our intuition or brain. You need a moment of being truly connected to yourself. It's always just a moment because we live in the crowded world, constantly distracted by technologies and this and that. But when you are really connected to yourself and to God you are able to listen to your heart and to feel what is honest and right.

Persistence Pays Off

DONNA BENTON, FOUNDER & CEO OF THE ENTERTAINER (THE REGION'S GO-TO DINING AND LIFESTYLE SAVINGS APP), KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS TO WALK THE ENTREPRENEUR'S LONELY PATH. HERE SHE SHARES FIVE PIECES OF ADVICE TO ENCOURAGE THOSE ON THE JOURNEY.



1 REMEMBER WHY YOU STARTED

When things feel overwhelming, go back to your "why". The vision that made you start this journey is still there – it just gets buried under the noise. A strong "why" can pull you through moments when willpower alone won't.

2 PROGRESS IS RARELY LINEAR

Success doesn't look like a straight up tick. It's messy, full of lows, stalls, and leaps forward you can't predict. Don't measure your progress only by external wins. Sometimes survival, learning, or building resilience is the win.

3 BUILD YOUR CIRCLE, EVEN IF IT'S SMALL

Entrepreneurship feels lonely, but you don't have to do it completely alone. Find at least one person – another founder, a mentor, a friend – who understands the grind. Community is fuel when your tank is empty.

4 TRUST YOUR GUT – BUT CHECK YOUR BLIND SPOTS

Your intuition got you here; it's one of your greatest assets. But when doubts creep in, don't confuse fear with fact. Balance instinct with input from trusted voices. Use feedback as calibration, not discouragement.

5 Play the long game

Every overnight success had years of invisible effort behind it. Remember that persistence often outlasts talent, money, and luck. If you can stay in the game, refine, and keep showing up, your odds increase dramatically. Entrepreneurship is endurance, not a sprint.

THANK YOU!

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