

Karen Alexander

Notable Solutions

"The WiRE Program gave me the wonderful opportunity of mentoring six other women, and the bonds formed during this time I will treasure"



YOU AND YOUR VENTURE

What words would describe you as a person?

A very determined warrior

Describe how you would pitch your venture

I live Life with Courage and Conviction. 12 years ago I was diagnosed with incurable / terminal cancer and we purchased a burial plot. I write a blog about surviving cancer with hints and tips. Focusing mainly on the mindset. Educating people about Epigenetics and healing outside the current medical system when addressing cancer.

At what stage is your venture?

My book is complete and has been published.

What is your service or product?

I sell books, and tell my story of beating the odds to inspire others who are given absolutely no hope.

What is the structure of your venture?

Solo

What type of venture do you have?

The business of freelance writing and publishing

Does your venture reach local/national/international markets/audiences?

My book can be purchased globally –
My blog gets hits from UK, Germany, Netherlands, USA, South America etc

IDENTITY

**In one word, characterise your life as an entrepreneur
(Why this particular word?)**

Unique - I live an extraordinary life

What does success mean to you?

A roof over my head, food in my belly and a feeling of peace

What is your favourite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

Freedom to express and embrace the real me!

MOTIVATION / MINDSET

What mindset(s) helps make you successful?

To endure whatever the hardship is

What ignited the spark in you to start a new business venture or to make significant changes in an existing business?

After being a recluse for nine years, I wanted to be an inspirational speaker. I had a story to tell to inspire others, but someone told me no one would want to hear my story, I had no purpose in life when I applied to participate in the WiRE program and was graciously accepted. The rest is history!

How do you conquer those moments of doubt that so often stifle or trip or stop so many entrepreneurs with great ideas...what pushes you through?

A belief in myself and listening to my intuition

What is your favourite quote?

Nothing is unreachable or incurable only a lack of will

VISION

What is your vision for your venture

Considering writing fiction stories / doing podcasts

SELF-EFFICACY AND SKILLS

To what do you attribute your success in progressing your entrepreneurial journey?

Stubbornness, resilience, determination, one step at a time and commitment

What would you say are the top three skills needed to be a successful entrepreneur?

Belief in yourself, passion, and focus

What was your biggest mistake in an entrepreneurial context?

Not believing in myself, and listening to the doubts in my mind. I knew I had to be healthy to take onboard publishing a book. It was the chicken and egg scenario.

What was your biggest barrier you faced in your entrepreneurial journey and how did you overcome it?

Re-living the emotional heartache to put my words to paper, and being photographed and putting myself in front of the public. I haven't overcome it, but I have learnt to tolerate it in short bursts.

What sacrifices have you had to make to be a successful entrepreneur?

None really, once I had made the commitment, nothing would sway me otherwise.

In your view what factors help individuals make the transition to self-employment?

I have found a common thread - either women who have had a bad experience with a previous employer, or they have moved to a new location which doesn't offer the job opportunities they are seeking.

STRATEGY

What would you say are the top 3 key elements for starting your business?

Focus, commitment and a belief you can help someone.

What has been your most successful form(s) of marketing?

Speaking personally to people, Facebook, and book catalogues

What are your thoughts on the value of partnerships?

I don't like partnerships, it brings a great deal of bother with corporate governance and if things go sour, it just causes more unnecessary stress dealing with the red tape.

Where did your venture funding/capital come from?

I did some short-term book keeping

What creative strategies did you use to execute on minimal cash flow?

Minimised expenses in my personal life for example negotiating to reduce insurance premiums last year saved \$750

What habits helped make you successful?

Note taking, meditating, critical analysis and always asking what I could do different or better. Always trying to be consciously aware and listening to my intuition.

What are your top two tools that you use in your venture (i.e. online tools)

Facebook, Blogspot, and source bottle

Do you want to grow your business? How will you do this?

Yes

How do you stay motivated when things get busy with family and other things?

Write out 'To Do' lists to keep a balance

NETWORKS

To what extent do you agree with the following statement and why?

"The connections and networks that exist between people and enabled cooperation is one of the most important things in entrepreneurship"

It depends on what market share you are targeting and what audience you are trying to attract

What kinds of networks do you access to help your entrepreneurial journey?

Writing groups

Wellbeing groups

Do you have a mentor? If so, how have they helped you? If not, was that a conscious choice?

I mentor myself, no one has been on a life journey like mine.

IMPACT OF THE WiRE PROGRAM

Why did you decide to participate in the WiRE Program?

After being a recluse for nine years, I needed a purpose in life.

What knowledge have you acquired?

How to have a blog, zoom video meetings, awareness of many online software tools

What skills were developed?

Interacting with groups and people again

How useful were these skills in developing your venture and/or your future career?

Excellent! I found out people do want to know my story and I am inspiring others.

What has been the impact of the WiRE Program?

(on both you personally and your venture)

Personally – A huge impact!

I am very grateful for the opportunity

Venture wise – Confidence and re-enforcing to never quit or give up on yourself

What benefits have you derived by participating in the program?

Benefits of meeting and networking with smart and intelligent women with a passion

To what extent has the WiRE Program affected your attitudes to entrepreneurship or employment more generally?

MASSIVE!.. I was rebelling with a lack of solutions and opportunities for someone in my situation. Now I state with confidence “I am an entrepreneur and I inspire people”.

If you have started a venture, what do you think are the chances of its survival?

My business relies totally on writing and how well I market the product I create.

If you had a business/venture when you started engaging in the WiRE Program, have you grown your venture or scaled it up as a result of the WiRE Program. If yes please explain your answer (both in term of the dollar value of the total enterprise as well as the scale-up value? or/and increase in sales or growth in customer numbers) (whichever applies).

The writing and publishing is still in the infant stages, but it is a first step and a start. I didn't have any books published when I started and now I have been published in two other books, one on wellbeing and also inspirational stories with other people around the world - As well as publishing my own book - I still haven't sold enough books to cover my initial investment into this business venture. I am gauging the various marketing strategies and bang for my buck for what will give me the best returns.

How appropriate to you are the skills delivered by the WiRE Program?

Not so much skills, as many can be self taught. It was inter-acting and being accepted in a group format.

To what extent have you applied the skills/knowledge learnt through the WiRE Program?

Source bottle was the launch of becoming published internationally.

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped you to develop strong ties between yourself and other women entrepreneurs? Why?

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To what extent has the WiRE Program helped with the facilitation of emotional support for your entrepreneurial journey? Why?

A great deal, it gave me a framework in which to become published and I didn't feel so isolated and alone. I felt as though I had purpose.

To what extent has the WiRE Program helped you to get to know and network with women from different backgrounds, for example different socioeconomic status, age, generation etc?

Excellent – different businesses, different ages and very different backgrounds. I felt as though I could relate to all because of experiences in life.

To what extent has the WiRE Program enhanced your ability to link with other entrepreneurs and agencies outside the WiRE community that could benefit your entrepreneurial journey?

The WIRE Program encouraged me to open up and start trusting people again.

If your venture has not been online previously, has your venture gone online as a result of the WiRE Program?

Yes, I only joined Facebook in Sept 2017 and the social media culture because of the WIRE Program.

If relevant, have you influenced someone else through your WiRE experience to start or grow a venture? "Passing it on" .

Yes – I have encouraged others to write and be published, which they have done.

Has your venture gone global as a result of the WiRE Program?

Yes

Name the biggest overall lesson you have learnt in your entrepreneurial journey so far that could be passed on to other women

Never give up on yourself or your dream

Where to find you online

Blog: <http://courageandconviction.life>

<https://www.facebook.com/courageandconviction/>

Please share some final thoughts about the WiRE Program

I cried when I found out I had been granted a mentor role for the twelve week program. The realisation was felt, resonating deeply in my solar plexus. This struggle and fight for my life had brought me to this particular point on my life's journey. Where I could mentor other women and be given the chance to inspire others - not just in a business sense, but on a deeply personal level to guide them to believe in themselves and not to question their own self-worth based on other people's views and opinions. Interacting with these bright intelligent women, re-opened my heart to the outside world.

- Karen Alexander -