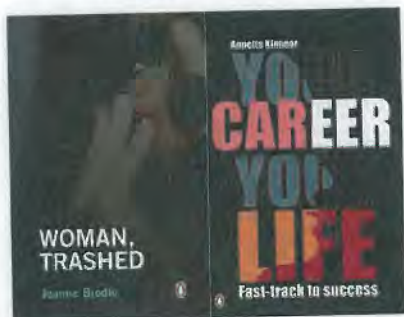


FEATURE WRITER

Q&A

with Joanne Brodie and Annette Kinnear



MEET JOANNE..

Outline 'Woman, Trashed'

Woman, Trashed is a story of hope, courage and inspiration. It tells my story of feeling different and of finding drugs and alcohol which made me feel better about myself. I stopped street drugs (cocaine in 1981) but then told myself I wasn't an addict anymore because I didn't use street drugs so I carried on using prescription drugs for another 12 years. It is also the story of my bipolar affective disorder (ladymania) and the impact that it had on my life (enormous) I ultimately become a prostitute and a dominatrix before ending up in rehab. About 16 suicide attempts. Lose custody of my son. Rehab is the start of change and is the turning point. I start to want to be clean and want to be alive. After a few years get asked to be a trainee counsellor at leading addiction treatment centre. Life was full of miracles. Stay there for four and half years. Leave to go into private practice. End up having reiki as well as doing reiki courses. During reiki sessions images of my sexual abuse by my father came up. Pieces of the puzzle rather than the puzzle itself. Spend lots of time dealing with this. Attract a lot of clients with similar issues into my practice. After a few years open up my own treatment centre with my son. After nearly two years have major bipolar meltdown (didn't know that I was that bipolar!) and ended up having to close the business after my incredibly bizarre behaviour.

Joanne, you are one of the most respected counsellors in the field of addiction. How did this help you when writing your book and what has the response from your patients been?

I think that because I had or have a strong foundation that it helped me because I was able to get through the really painful times and difficult times the writing triggered. The response from my clients has been hugely positive and they feel that they can trust me even more now.

Where do you go to find inspiration?

I go to God, my angels, my guides and my ascended masters.

What advice can you give to aspiring writers?

I would advise people to write something every day. I was very disciplined and I wrote every day and it made me feel very good about the overall process.

What quote do you live by?

It is better to be beautiful than good but it is better to be good than ugly by Oscar Wilde. I apologise for being a bit tongue in cheek but it kind of goes with my book!

What is YOUR favourite book?

Women who run with the Wolves by Clarissa Pinkola Estes.

MEET ANNETTE..

Outline of 'Your Career, Your Life'

Your Career, Your Life is a book for people who want to maximise their potential and make the most of their opportunities at work. It is the mentor so many people wish they had. Metaphorically speaking, each week they make an appointment with this mentor and learn from her comprehensive experience. The book is divided into 48 lessons, one for each week of the year. It is filled with background insights into what goes on in corporations, many tips for strengthening the soul as well as practical guidelines on how to get ahead in a company.

What was your first job?

One of my early jobs I vividly remember was when I decided to be a farm worker at age 16. The money seemed great. We were about twenty women and had to re-plant baby lettuces into huge fields in hot and humid conditions. I only lasted one day. At the end of that day the 'great money' felt like a pittance in return for the effort it took to earn it. I am glad for the experience because it made me respect physical labour. My first job in SA was as a receptionist in a car workshop in Selby. We had very exacting clients who had paid a lot of money for their luxurious cars, so the standards were high. When something had gone wrong in the workshop, the clients naturally confronted me about these issues. I really had no internal or external resources or skills to deal with them. I ended up crying most nights. Having a book such as Your Career, Your Life then would have changed my outlook dramatically.

With regards to the economic crisis what advice can you give to those looking for a successful career?

In difficult economic times, the power and the full engagement of each individual worker becomes even more critical to businesses. This is a time of opportunity. Here is an extract from Your Career, Your Life on the matter: '... Don't be concerned with the up and downs of economic cycles. Particularly during times of decline, individual effort gains in importance and is generously rewarded...'

Tell us about IRIE Inspiration.

IRIE is a Jamaican word which means 'Everything is ok, because I am in charge of my life. Everything is under control'. IRIE aims to increase the prosperity and happiness of all of us in SA. There are three divisions: Career Development – this is for individuals who want personal mentorship to drive their careers to the next step. Corporate Inspiration – this is for companies who have recognised the need to inspire their staff to greater heights. Cross-Cultural Inspiration – here we teach people to connect with others in the work place through the medium of language and culture. We teach all eleven languages and provide basic cultural insights into the various ethnic groups that exist in SA.

Where do you go to find inspiration?

In giving. Giving inspires. I also draw strength from my faith and spending time in prayer. On a practical level, direct inspiration for me usually comes from books. And, when my mind starts to overload with clutter, I spend time in nature, riding my horses or just watching them graze. I never leave my horses without them having given me another creative idea. Animals in general are a huge source of inspiration for me.

What advice can you give to aspiring writers?

The first step is to define what you do not want to write, then define what you do want to write about, then define what you cannot write about, then calculate the cost of what it will take to make the dream of writing a reality, then make a decision to pay the price or not. If you decide to go ahead at this point, it is important to know that published writing is rarely the product of a hobby. Writing is a profession. To do it you need professional skills. It is not that difficult to obtain these skills but I really recommend looking into a course or reading some books on what publishers are looking for these days. There is no need to achieve perfection before starting, but you do need to demonstrate a basic ability to apply modern writing principles. Once you have convinced a publisher of that, your house will be very supportive and perfect your work together with you. It is a wonderful experience to write a book. This is what you want to do, it's worth paying the price. It was for me.

What is YOUR favourite book?

Every significant chapter of my life was accompanied by a few special books. One of my favourites is 'Your Career, Your Life'. The day I got my copy, I read it cover to cover and really learned from it again, myself. I think this is precisely because it summarises the gems of wisdom from many of my favourite books, which are listed at the back of the book. If I must make a decision on a favourite book of all times, I think it is possibly 'The Holy War' by John Bunyan, written in the seventeenth century.