LifeToday

Julie-Ann strums along to

the feel-good beat

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At the age of 45, Julie-Ann Rudge decided it was time to change her life and re-discover her love of music – so she turned her back on her PR career to become a drummer and music teacher

about drumming he UAE with the beat of the African instrument.

The former PR executive set up Dubai Drums three years ago and now runs community drum circles and corporate team-building sessions, as well as teaching in local schools and entertaining guests at social events.

49-year-old, who describes herself as a "citizen of planet earth" was born in Chiswick, United Kingdom, but spent her teenage years in New Zealand before moving to the Middle East.

Julie-Ann has two children, Tamer, 26, and Dima, 13, and lives in the Green Community with her husband, Guy, a 46-yearold offshore survey manager

Here, she tells Emirates Today how she neglected her love for

06.30 My husband wakes me; he's up at the crack of dawn anylater, otherwise I get up to take Breakfast is eaten in the car - usually a banana or a yogurt.

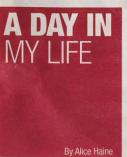
teaching that day, we'll go in the white transit van that has 240 who are surprised to see a woman whizzing by in such a big van. I sometimes fill in for the music

teacher at Dima's school because drumming de-stresses so I'll unload the drums and prepare for a morning of lessons.

Drumming came into my life when I turned 45. I was working in PR and decided that if I didn't start my own business then I the van and the rest are spread

I've always been interested in holistic health, energy healing and like learning a language. In astrology so I decided to set up a Africa, tribes play the Jembe to mind/body/spirit festival in Dubai.

I spent months working on it and one of the acts I booked was a





Dubai Drums. which has 25

> Julie-Ann Jembe drum after quitting own business

Then at the last minute the main sponsor let me down and the event was cancelled, but the music for 30 years and why she thing that disappointed me the lunch but I often forget to eat.

my own community drum circle he's up at the crack of dawn anyway to go to work. If I've had a together through music – but I late drumming session I'll sleep in needed to learn how to play first.

So when my daughter won a was invited to the finals in South Africa, I went too.

07.30 We arrive at an intensive course in drumming. I'd never done it before, but it was

If you think about it too much drums in the back. I receive a lot vou lose the rhythm, but if you let of funny looks from lorry drivers yourself go you enter an alpha state almost like meditation and it becomes a form of healing.

It's been medically proven that drumming is a brilliant way to because it connects the right and educate children about rhythm, left side of the brain and raises your level of endorphins - the happy hormones - in your body.

The drum I use is the Jembe. originally from West Africa. I've actually got 400 in total - 240 in around the house.

Learning to play the drum is communicate from village to village. There are different rhythms for everything from births to stern-looking professionals with band – Dima's father.

My husband was a

I have taken that language and started off as a hobby has turned into a fully fledged business.

I did my first corporate team together like a tribe. then I was asked to perform at to where I am today - doing the I love the city because it has Gitex and I haven't looked back thing I love most-playing music. such a great energy. I often think grown through word of mouth.

ing all the e-mails I receive and learned the guitar and sang.

setting up meetings with firms to If I remember, I'll grab some

15.00 Pill try to pick Dima taxi. I feel guilty not being there school gate take the taxi drivers' number so I know she's safe.

Dima loves me being a drum-mer; I think she's quite proud her the world so that I could Italy and see my boyfriend. mum has her own business and is involved in something creative.

The main thing that stops me meeting Dima is a team building corporate session.

It's amazing to watch the effect the drum can have on a group of

66 Drumming de-stresses you because it raises your endorphins ""

When I first arrive at a corpoarms folded and ties knotted.

on their faces and there's a sense

when I was nine because my par-

13.00 After the and as a great place to grow up, and as an only child I spent a lot of time on my own riding my and live lite on the eage in an exciting, dynamic environment.

At the same time we both ready to start all over again.

discuss what they want me to do. my life. I was offered the chance to join a rock band, but I'd also fallen in love with an Italian man because he was very ill.

from school but if I'm rushing to ship and I'd met him at a hotel I another job she'll go home in a was working in as a receptionist.

My father gave me an ultimamyself but the guards on the tum, either I stay in New Zealand and join the band, or he would the world so that I could go to

> In the end I took the ticket. At the time I did not realise what an impact that decision would have on my life. From then until now, I totally ignored music.

> The relationship with the Italian guy didn't work out either, so I headed to the United Kingdom where I met my first husband.

He was Egyptian and on holiday from university. We fell in love and married in Cairo when I was 20 and two years later I gave birth to my son Tamer, who's 26.

By then both my parents had died. Their deaths made me feel very cut off from people, but I suppose what doesn't kill you makes you stronger and turns vou into a survivor.

Sadly my marriage didn't work stressed out executives – it's a real out and we divorced in my late 20s. I stayed in Egypt for my son and there I met my second hus-

My husband was a pharmacist Fifteen minutes later the ties Middle East - including Dubai brought it to Dubai and what have loosened, there's big smiles but the marriage didn't last either.

After we split, Dima and I of unity in the room as they drum stayed here because I had a PR It's taken 30 years for me to get than eight years now.

I was born in Britain but left there's a real synergy between Dubai and parts of my own personality. We both like to take risks, tween midnight and 3am so bed-It was a great place to grow up, and live life on the edge in an time falls into that slot. But as

company. That involves answer- music. I played the clarinet, supportive network around you.

Then at 18 I hit a crossroads in five years ago. We knew straightaway that something was going to nitely fired that night.

When we first got together there was no music in my life and no performing - that side of me

19.00 If there's no drumming event that evening, then I stay in and cook dinner for the family. It could be homemade tacos or roast beef. I prefer vegetarian food, but Guy is a real carnivore.

Trying to balance the drumming and see my family can be hard. Last weekend was the first weekend I've spent at home for months so we spent it chilling out together as a family.

If Drums of the World - my drumming group - is booked in for a gala dinner, then I charge out the door at about 6pm ready to perform.

I set up the group towards the end of last year gathering from across Dubai

Our first performance was in Deira City Centre and we had no time to rehearse so it was a spontaneous jamming session.

Now we have a core group of 12 drummers but we can perform with as many as 25. We have Kenya, South Africa, the Philippines, Japan and three locals too. We have all learned on different instruments, but we can blend all the rhythms together into this spectacular sound.

I sometimes think if we can career so I've been here for more make such an amazing sound what would happen if we did.

> 00.00 I arrive home any time belong as I get eight hours then I'm

