

CRAZY WINDOW



MEET THESE 5 WOMEN IN BUSINESS

LYDIA LEE

Q: Crazy Window readers would love to know about your cubicle crashing journey, when and why did you screw your cubicle?

I said goodbye to my 6 figure corporate job about 4 years ago, and have started 2 businesses since then.

The turning point for me started when I had an emotional breakdown in a Moscow hotel room during a business trip in my old job that set everything in motion for my search for more fulfillment in my career.

My definition of success was shaped by what I was told, which was more money equals more happiness.

I guess you could say that I climbed the corporate ladder, and the view was not what I was expecting.

I could not accept that the 9-5 way of living was the only way, so my search for meaningful work and a purposeful way of living became my priority.

In my own search for finding out who I was and what I wanted to express without the identity of my education or my resume, I felt more alive than ever before.



Lydia Lee is the freedom-based lifestyle and business coach at Screw The Cubicle, and podcast host of The Cubicle Crashing Podcast.

She helps corporate prisoners escape the confines of the 9-5 life through.

Now based in Bali, she enjoys location independency, self-expression, and a purposeful career, coaching others to gain full freedom at its finest.

Q. How did you prepare yourself for your freedom journey? Did you have any previous experience with running a business?

Once I made a decision that it was my mission to find alternative ways to live and work, I hired a coach to help me to create my exit plan for the next 6 months. I needed someone to give me the courage to own my value and validate I had the strengths and skills to create my own business.

I had no experience running my own business, but I did have experience working in startups and corporations, so I used my professional experience to also start my own. It took about 9 months to quit from the day I decided. From working additional jobs to save money to negotiating working part time on a contract basis with my then employer, I worked very hard in between to transition to my new business.

Utilizing her unique coaching program and workshops, she guides people towards careers and lives of authenticity. She combines their passions with skills and talents they already have to live a life of meaning, play and service.

Q. Do you think people should start freelancing as a side job before taking it as a full time career?

Yes, some people can absolutely start with freelancing first to experiment and test out their skills, especially if it's the type of work that is different from their current 9-5 job. If you can help as many people while you are still at your job, and figure out if this new direction of work makes your heart sing, then you have a greater confidence and motivation to quit your job.

I believe in beta testing and experimentations before taking the big leap, as most of us need that reassurance that we have something to offer and an idea that people will buy.

I myself beta tested with 8 coaching clients before I launched Screw The Cubicle, and that was great for me as I was able to see if I enjoyed working with clients and also see if the process of what I created works! And what a great way to get testimonials and confidence for your services before you announce it to the world.

Q. Tell us about your courses, what can our readers look for in screw the cubicle?

My program “The Real You Roadmap” is my signature 8 week program (<http://screwthecubicle.com/the-real-you-road-map/>) to help high achieving corporate prisoners to identify their best talents and strengths to lead from to create a location independent business that they are passionate about.

They work with me to shift their mindset from employee to entrepreneur, and tackle the fears and limiting beliefs that have kept them from taking the leap. We also work on what their offer is to the world, and finding their voice and perspective they will use to influence the people they are meant to help.

For people who already have a business idea and understand their skills and strengths, they will work with me on the “Freedom Business Blueprint” 5 week program (<http://screwthecubicle.com/freedom-business-blueprint/>) that helps them create their first offer and craft up the structure and how they work with their clients to bring them to the outcome of what their offer promises. This gives them confidence in turning their big idea to a plan that they can use to design their business offering.

I also run a retreat in Bali with Turnpoint (<http://turnpoint.io/course/9-to-thrive/>) where people can come have a live intimate experience with me for 6 days to craft up their exit plan and identify their skills for a freedom-based business idea.

Q. Any advice to our readers on why they should focus on purpose to pursue their dreams.

The way we are built as human beings (not human doings) require us to know why we are doing certain things, to be motivated to keep going despite obstacles, challenges, or fear. So if we build our dreams based on purpose, to know how we want our work to impact, and the big WHY behind the reason for our work, we are then fueled by a bigger force than just the pursuit of money or prestige. Then our work can be our life’s work, rather than just work to pay the bills, and we can actually enjoy it and be passionate about it. This is where the most creative ideas and energy and born from.

Knowing how we want to live our personal lives purposefully as well helps us determine the choices we want to make in our lives. What do we want to do with the money we will make? How does it really benefit our lives? What experiences do we want to have? Once we get clearer on these things, we can then focus on creating our style of working that fits that lifestyle, rather than the other way around. We’ve been taught to conform the way we live based on our job requirements, and I am inviting you to shift that mindset to a new way of thinking.

SARAH JACOB

Q. When and why was Tangolia formed?

I created Tangolia in 2013, but the seed of the idea formed in 2011 when I was freelancing for a company that does creativity and innovation workshops for large corporations.

The CEO loved using metaphors, so I began using tango as a metaphor for collaboration in business.

I would talk about the role of leader and follower as invitation and response rather than control and obey.

The CEO invited me to write an article on this topic for his blog, and it was very well-received by his business audience.

It became an idea that wouldn't let me sleep. The more I thought about it, the more the metaphor expanded.

I began doing research on connection, positive psychology, and leadership, and when I combined that with my experience in the corporate world, I knew I had something unique and valuable.

Something that could open up new channels and make work life in Corporate America more fulfilling and satisfying.

In 2013 I gave my first talk on Tango and the Art of Connection at a TEDx event in New York. Tangolia was born.



Sarah Martha Jacob
is an entrepreneur
and dancer living in
Kingston, NY.

She founded Tangolia
in 2013, and she
founded EssJay
Consulting in 2011,
working with small
businesses in the
Hudson Valley as an
outside Chief
Financial Officer

Q. You traveled around the world for an year and a half, tell us about how it helped you find your happiness.

I was lucky enough to travel and follow my passion for tango while asking Life's Big Questions. I was happier than I ever remember being, but at the time I didn't know exactly why I was so happy.

I discovered the reason later when I was doing some research in positive psychology. I read that all of the happiness research over the last century has pointed to one thing: a person's happiness can best be predicted by the breadth and depth of their social connections.

My whole journey was fueled on connection with a touch of serendipity. I never stayed in hotels, and instead reached out through the tango community to find people to stay with. This was WAY more outgoing than I would normally be, but I felt really embraced by this network of tango people.

Tango people aren't like regular people – they are open to connecting, because that's what the dance requires. So I was experiencing connection both within the dance and within the community. It was such a high, and along with a sense of adventure and discovery, I felt truly happy.

Sarah previously spent eight years in Boston's financial industry after graduating Summa Cum Laude with a BS in Finance from the University of Connecticut.

Q. How Tangolia helps people find their right path in life?

There's a phrase I say at the end of every Tangolia talk: "Seek connection and your path will lay itself down at your feet. You could walk down the path, but while we're here, we should dance." To find your path, you have to be open.

And when you're open and connecting with others, you learn things about yourself and life. You meet people who do what you don't want to do, and that's useful. You meet people who do things that excite you, and you explore that. Those people may help you or teach you, and that gets you closer to your path. The path emerges one conversation at a time. It's that simple.

Q. You are also consulting as an CFO for small businesses, would you like to share some common mistakes that small businesses often commit?

Yes, I also work with small businesses in the Hudson Valley of New York as an outside CFO, which I love. Small business owners are some of the hardest working people, and they're doing their best with what they know. An entrepreneur often tries to play all of the management roles (and many of the worker bee roles) because resources are tight. It's impossible to do it all, so the discipline the entrepreneur must adopt is to do what he/she is expertly good at, and then bring in other people who get to do what THEY are expertly good at in support of the business.

If the entrepreneur is great at sales, they should bring in someone else to run operations. If they are terrible at sales but great at working on the product, they should bring in an outside salesperson. This is not admitting defeat, it's leverage, it's smart, and it's the only way to sustain and grow in the long run.

Another error is to ignore the financials and hope for the best, only checking in to see if there is enough in the account to make current payments. The business owner must be proactive about looking at P&Ls every month, creating a budget, and then looking at budget vs. actuals. This is the minimum level of financial health and well-being and is important in understanding profitability, goals, and progress.

Q. One advice to our readers on why they should do things that makes them real happy.

I actually work very hard to eliminate the word "should" from my vocabulary! I can't possibly know what another person should do unless I was living that person's life in their shoes. I can only speak from my experience, and what I know about being happy for myself is that it's not easy. Sometimes I'm on a roll and I feel happy for a while. Then I'll get into a slump and I lose it.

I know for sure that happiness has nothing to do with what's going on in my life. It's a choice. Anything that happens can make me happy or sad, depending on my state of mind. So I practice doing things that create a positive state of mind.

Some of those things for me are: daily meditation, getting good sleep on a consistent schedule, eating healthy foods, getting out into nature, exercising, and reading books that connect me with my spirit. I know that I need to dance tango at some regular frequency to get in touch with my aliveness.

I need to connect with close friends who love and understand me. And I practice gratitude all the time as my go-to state of being no matter what is happening on the outside. I'm grateful for the chance to stir things up, to be who I am, to dance with life and to just keep going.

MEET KYM

Q. How do you fund your freedom lifestyle?

I generally take contracts of 6 to 12 months duration and I spend my money consciously. Once upon a time you would have found me at a shopping centre nearly every weekend buying clothes and shoes. I don't do that anymore.

Traveling taught me that I don't need things in my life to be happy. I also used to eat out often and go to bars with friends.

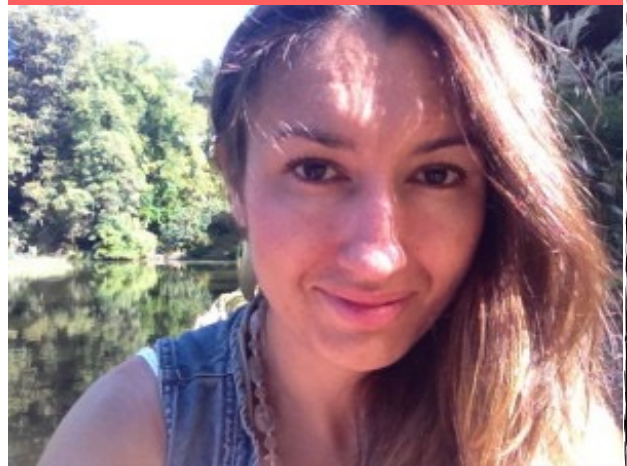
I don't do that as much these days but I don't feel like I'm missing out. I have a choice in how I spend my money and I choose to use it to fund my dreams.

Q. One advice to our readers on how to overcome fear and follow their dreams.

When you feel scared about taking a leap of faith or a step towards your dream, focus on your dream not your fear. What you give your attention and energy to grows so grow your dream not your fear.

Dream into it more. Feel how you will feel to live that dream. Also think about how you will feel if you don't live that dream and the regret you might have.

The stronger your desire to make your dream a reality becomes the more your dream pulls you toward it so that final step, although still scary, is easier.



Kym Wilson is a writer and coach, an expert at navigating change, living in uncertainty and a master of courage to do the things that scare her.

In 2013 she walked the via francigena pilgrimage route from Canterbury in England to Saint Peter's Square in Rome, a journey of over 2,000 km that she undertook alone.

Q. “I Quit my job and followed my dreams” is easily said than achieved. How difficult was it for you to take your first step?

It can be really scary taking a leap of faith into the unknown. When I first quit my job without another job to go to, I was petrified. It went against the grain of how I thought the world worked i.e. you should always have another job lined up.

In addition, I was leaving a job that had awesome career potential as well as an organization that I loved and had been my work home of 7 years. I worried that I was sabotaging my career and was going to ruin my life financially. I didn't know how the marketplace would view my skills or my reasons for quitting my job.

I thought that spending savings on a sabbatical rather than investing in something that would go up in financial value was a huge waste of money.

I sought the advice of a trusted mentor who helped me to see things from a different perspective and I dreamed into my dreams. My longing for freedom and adventure was persistent and strong. I decided to resign.

Making that decision was the hardest step. Handing in my resignation was sad but also a tremendous relief. Then the adventure began. These fears have never gone away entirely. They still surface from time to time to ask me what on earth I think I am doing.

But I now have a back-catalog of experiences that have shown me when I follow my heart and my callings that things always turn out okay, just sometimes not the way I think they will.

Currently based in Melbourne, she is preparing for the release of her book whilst planning her next pilgrimage walking from Rome to Jerusalem in 2015. She writes about wander, wonder and wayfinding and helps others find their own way.

Q. You are doing so many things in life; traveling, scuba diving, walking 2022 km and so on...so when did it all start?

Over the course of my life there have been many people I have met, experiences I have had and choices I have made that have lead me to this point in my life. An ex-boyfriend of many years encouraged me to travel alone, to explore my own travel dreams and to learn how to scuba dive.

I fell in love with a small hawksbill turtle on my second dive and after that I was hooked.

The most pivotal turning point was not long after we broke up. I had a bad diving experience and decided I needed to learn how to look after myself in the water.

At the same time my financial planning career had detoured down a path that I really disliked.

I didn't know what I wanted to do but I felt this calling to be free and follow my passions for a while. So I quit my job and took a sabbatical.

I flew to Phuket where I did my Rescue Diver and Divemaster courses and travelled around Southeast Asia. While I was there I met my now ex-partner David and ended up splitting my time between Phuket and Australia for a few years.

I found it a difficult adjustment to come back to Melbourne to city, corporate life after spending so much time outdoors and in the sea so I started walking to and from work every day. I loved seeing my hometown on foot and watching the seasons transition.

One year I spent summer in Italy with David where he is from.

I had a week to myself before I met up with him and after exploring different ideas I discovered this ancient pilgrimage route called Via Francigena that passed through Tuscany and decided to walk 120 kilometers of it over 6 days.

At that time, it was the hardest thing I had ever done. I got lost a lot and I cried a lot but I loved it and dreamed of walking the whole trail from Canterbury to Rome which I did in 2013.

On that journey I met Peter and Paulius 9 days from arriving in Rome and they were the ones that gave me this idea of walking from Rome to Jerusalem.

Q. What was your motivation behind walking down the ancient pilgrimage all alone?

There are things in life that call for us to experience them.

Via Francigena was one of those things for me.

After walking that section through Tuscany in 2011, I dreamed of walking the whole trail “one day” but it seemed like a crazy thing to do.

We live in a busy world where we try to cram so much into our lives.

Walking at 4 km/h through England, France, Switzerland and Italy didn’t make sense. But the calling was persistent.

My heart swelled with joy and I felt excited whenever I thought about it.

After returning permanently to Melbourne from Phuket, I took a job back in financial planning while I still tried to figure out what I wanted to do with my life.

Unexpectedly, I was made redundant and was forced to make a decision: get another job or do something else.

I didn’t want to get another job in financial planning but I still didn’t know what else I wanted to do.

So I turned to my dreams.

The idea of walking Via Francigena was still front and centre. I had to ask myself—is this just going to be a maybe one day, maybe never kind of dream or was I going to go and do it? The timing was right.

I had no debt or other commitments and I could use my time walking to answer the question of what I wanted to do with my life that offers my gifts and talents to the world.

Although I was open to meeting people along the way, I wanted to walk alone so that I could hear the quiet voice of wisdom that can be more easily heard during meditation and solitude.

It is that voice that holds our answers.

MEET LAVINIA

Q. When and why was Project Getaway started?

The idea for Project Getaway came to Michael Bodekaer, a Danish tech entrepreneur and the founder of the event, five years ago, while he was traveling, kite surfing and simultaneously working on his startups.

He loved getting to know different cultures and experiencing new things every day but he missed the fun and inspiration you get when you connect with like-minded people.

So he invited a group of fellow entrepreneurs to live and work with him for a month in Bali and soon after, the event became widely popular.

In a nutshell, the event brings together entrepreneurs and digital nomads from all over the world, for a full month, to co-work and co-live in a paradise-like, chore-free environment.

It is, basically, a retreat, an incubator, a conference, a network gathering and a working holiday all in one.

The event is a not-for-profit initiative, all revenue being used to create the best possible experience for those participating.

Fast forward to today, we receive 4-500% more applications than we can accommodate and we're seamlessly working to making the event better and hopefully take it to other continents too!



Lavinia is an intrapreneur and business enthusiast passionate about exploring the world. She manages Project Getaway in Bali.

Q. Most of the digital nomads start their career from places like Thailand and Bali, what do you find interesting about Bali apart from the cost of living factor?

Bali's secret sauce is a mix of picture-perfect beaches, sunsets and rice paddies, the nicest and most hospitable people you'll ever meet, a variety of activities and adrenaline pumping water sports available, a wonderful community of digital nomads and expats, amazing cultural events (there's a festival for everything here!), spirituality and I could go on and on.

There's always an endless list of exciting things you can do. I've seen a fair share of this beautiful world we live in but I don't remember ever enjoying myself this much.

Prior to moving to Bali and managing Project Getaway, she was in Baku, Azerbaijan, handling the regional management of an international event agency. Specialized in business development, she has spent most of her professional career implementing projects and expanding organizations on new markets.

Q. Since when have you been part of this project and what did you find most exciting about it?

I have been part of the entrepreneurial and startup world for the last few years, expanding different organizations on new markets and organizing events early this year, I got on board full-time with Project Getaway.

The most exciting thing about it is to see what happens when you bring together 20 self-driven, brilliant people, who come from the most diverse backgrounds, with very different stories, but have the same kind of dreams, challenges and mindsets.

Businesses are taken to the next level, life-long friendships are forged, lives are being changed, new ideas and projects are "born" and start being implemented.

It's an amazing process to be part of and actively contribute to.

Q. There is a lot of focus on following passion these days, what is your take?

There is indeed. I think it's amazing to find that narrow niche where your passion, what pays your bills and what you can actually do well all overlap. However, I also think the expectation of finding something that makes you feel super euphoric about it, every day, all day, and continues to do so for a really long time is, for many of us, unrealistic.

I think rather than starting from the concept of passion and focusing exclusively on it, we should look at the idea of purpose, of what it is that we want to achieve on the long term in our lives and why. Several recent studies have shown that "having a purpose or meaning in life" was chosen by 80% to 90% of the respondents as being extremely important for their happiness while money was chosen by only around 15-20%.

If you can form the ability to never lose sight of your purpose and big goals, you can then translate that into becoming passionate about what you do, no matter the route you take to get there and even if one particular day is all about menial tasks. That being said, I am definitely both very rational and extremely passionate about what I do.

Q. Anything in particular you would like to share with our readers on benefits of being a part of Project Getaway.

I'd dare to say that if you are a (current or aspiring) entrepreneur or a location independent professional/ digital nomad, you probably won't find out there a better way to spend a month.

During Project Getaway, the participants take their businesses to the next level, network and learn from each other, attend coaching sessions, workshops, go on amazing adventures and have the time of their lives.

Most of our alumni say they were amazed at how much they developed themselves and their businesses during Project Getaway, while still having had a great time exploring Bali and enjoying life. For example, Tobias Schelle, the founder of 24slides.com, said: "Project Getaway exceeded all expectations. I still feel inspired by the people I met years ago. Sometimes I see it as the best investment of my life, both personally and financially".

Lavinia has lived in 6 countries and has visited over 35 so far.

She loves to cook and has a soft spot for Art Nouveau architecture.

MEET SHIBY

Q. When and why did you start Spinach India?

Spinach was started in 2010. It was not at all a pre planned decision. Normally, I don't plan too much in my life.

The workaholic Corporate HR Head has been taking a toll on my life for more than a decade. Finally, I had to take a call.

Moreover, being a very straight forward, non diplomatic person, corporate career was not at all an easy task for me.

On a fine morning, I had to say good bye to my last employer. I could have joined another organization with a decent salary but my decision was to take a break.

Wanted to spend time to explore myself, work for the unreached especially women and children... Wanted to read Indian Philosophy, dance, paint, meditate and explore many other new avenues.

So, I decided to say good bye to Corporate life forever and started Spinach in 2010, April.

Q .What inspired you to take entrepreneurial route instead of a daily job?

I had nothing much to do in the corporate world.

Money was not at all a motivating factor in my life.

Being born and brought up in a middle class family, I considered money only as a medium for transaction.



Shiby P K is the founder and chief consultant of Spinach India.

She has more than 15 years of hands on experience in the field of Organization Development, Change Management, Human Resource Development, Learning & Development.

Q . What are the biggest challenges you faced while starting?

Setting up an organization was a challenging task. I had to do everything on my own. Right from getting a Corporation license to Telephone connection to Service Tax Registration. But, I had a group of friends to support.

Many a times, I was taken for a ride by the carpenters, painters, web designers etc. due to my lack of experience in dealing with them.

Q . One advice to younger generation on why they should focus on job creation rather than securing a corporate job.

“Who am I ? Why am I here ?
How do I want to be remembered ? ”Ask these questions to yourself every day.

Find your path... follow your dream... Be passionate about what you do...be honest with yourself.
Rest all will fall in place..Money is not everything in life.

Q. What is the best part of being your own boss?

Surprisingly, I was my own Boss throughout my career. Never worked as an employee.

Worked for more than 15-18 hours a day, travelled day and night, sacrificed personal life.

There was no one to Boss me in my corporate career because I was always a sincere, dependable, workaholic perfectionist.

Now too I am my own Boss... I enjoy my life in a different way.. without dead lines and review meetings... I get a lot of time to pursue my passions like working with schools, children, underprivileged fellow beings.

I enjoy music, dance, painting, reading, writing, travel and being with my dear ones.

She is also a visiting faculty for many B schools in India.

A Social activist who loves working with Women and Children in Kerala and performing research in the Education Sector.