

Q&A

...WITH GABRIELLA GODDARD



Gabriella Goddard

Author – Speaker – Success Coach

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1: What made you write a book about courage and confidence?

One of the biggest challenges I've face over the past few years was coping with a breast cancer scare.

Now we all know we are going to die sometime, but when the possibility is literally staring you in the face, it really puts life into perspective. I remember spending one weekend in the depths of depression, pleading with the greater forces above, telling them that I didn't want to die and that it wasn't time for me to go yet. I remember sitting and watching the swans at our local dock, just enjoying the warmth of the sun and the beauty of the white swan as it went about its daily business of being alive. Could all this be taken away from me? What had I done wrong? Surely I was too young to get cancer?

It sounds a bit melodramatic now looking back, but those of you who have been in a similar situation will probably find this familiar.

That's when I really started to look at my own life. Was I living my true life? Was I being who I was born to be? Was I really doing the things that made my heart sing and my soul dance? What about my legacy? What was I going to leave behind when I died?

It was about that time that I decided that I wanted to be a writer.

Ever since I was a little girl, I had loved writing. Apparently, I had an incredible imagination as a child and my short stories won competitions. I even wrote the school play at the tender age of 7. Writing for me was a way of escaping into my own little world. But as I got older, it seems that common sense took over and I pursued a path of science and technology – because "I'd never be out of a job."

Sitting there watching the white swans glide effortless across the water, I asked myself, "If not now....when?"

I realized that the only thing stopping me . . . was ME.

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And by writing Gulp! I hope that others don't have to get a wake up call like the one I had to realize that!

2: What was the most courageous thing you've done?

One of the most courageous things I've done was to take the plunge and set up my own business. When the broadband telecommunications company I worked for went bankrupt, we were all left without a job, an income and even a redundancy payout. I'd just used my hard earned savings to buy my first house so I was really broke.

Despite all that, I made the firm decision not to take on another marketing directorship and set up my own business instead. People thought I was crazy – and sometimes I thought I was too! But in retrospect it was one of the best decisions in my life, and one that changed my life forever.

It hasn't always been easy, but at least I'm in charge of my own life and free to take up many of the exciting new opportunities that cross my path each week.

There's certainly never a dull moment!

3: You are originally from New Zealand, and have lived in Japan, France, Mexico and the U.S. before settling in London. Why did you choose London?

In New Zealand, it's common for young people in their early 20s to do an OE (short for Overseas Experience). Typically after a couple of years of back-packing around the world, most people go home older, wiser and ready to settle down. I'm still waiting for that moment!

I've been very fortunate to have lived and worked in Osaka in Japan, Annecy in France and Mexico City in Mexico. I've also visited many other beautiful cities around the world – Barcelona, Paris, Miami, San Diego to name but a few.

I chose London to settle down in because my parents live over here. Plus it is such a vibrant cosmopolitan place full of people from all walks of life. It is a great example of how people from different cultures and religions can live relatively harmoniously. Just taking the tube in the morning is like being at a meeting of the United Nations!

4: How do you define success?

A great question! Success is doing what you love and loving what you're doing. It's about knowing what's important to you in your life and making that a priority. It's about being at peace with yourself and knowing who you are – warts and all. And it's about making a difference and making a positive contribution to our evolving world.

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The external symbols of success like swanky houses, cars and clothes are like crutches – nice to have, but not necessary. True success comes from within, being true to yourself and allowing your essence to shine through.

5: Who inspires you?

People who are multi-talented, innovative and passionate about what they do really inspire me.

Cesar Millan, the Dog Whisperer is one of my favorites – and that's saying a lot for a cat lover! His love and passion for his work really shine through and it is amazing what he is able to do to rehabilitate dogs and train their owners (as he so eloquently puts it). He is pure joy to watch and a reminder to us all to do that which makes us happy.

Magnus Scheving is the creator of Lazy Town and is an incredibly multi-talented man. A former world champion in aerobics, not only does he write and produce the series, he stars in it as well. What's more, he's driven by his passion for encouraging children to be active and healthy.

Jacqueline Wilson is a top children's author in the UK. What I love about her is her innate understanding of modern children and her ability to reach them through the power of word and imagination. She's a real legend and a wonderful role model for any budding author. Many of her books are illustrated by the distinct artwork of Nick Sharratt – which shows the power of true co-creation.

6: What makes you happy?

Simple things make me happy - the warmth of the summer sun on my face, the smell of freshly cut grass, the taste of fine champagne, the sound of waves lapping on the shore, hearing the laughter of children while they play and watching dolphins leap out of the sea.

7: What has been one of your biggest personal challenges?

A few years ago I was traveling around Costa Rica with some friends and we decided to go on a horse riding trek. Now, not being the most confident of people on a horse, naturally I was a bit cautious. But all seemed to be going well as we set off in single file. Luckily we were going up hill so thankfully cantering and even trotting wasn't an option.

We were climbing a hill in the forest where the ground was soft and muddy. Without warning, my horse's leg buckled and she fell down the hill – with me still strapped to her back. We eventually stopped and there I was lying flat on the ground with this frightened horse on top of me – literally! She was heavy. I couldn't move and my heart was pounding madly. The rest of the group hovered anxiously above me and a couple of them scrambled down the hill.

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It's weird what shock can do, but I knew that above all we had to stay calm. The horse was frightened with her legs flaying in the air and I could see the whites of her eyes. I spoke to her softly and she calmed down. I made a joke to my friends about "horse riding downunder style" and their laughter eased the tension in the air.

The big question was how on earth am I going to get out from underneath this horse without startling it, getting kicked in the head or slipping further down the hill. So I kept talking softly to the horse explaining every move that I was going to make. It was as if she understood me, because she completely calmed down. I gently slipped my leg out of the stirrup and started to slide out from underneath her, talking to her softly the whole time. And after what seemed an age, I finally got free from underneath her and then was able to pull her upright.

Luckily neither of us was injured. And it was only later when we were back on the trail that the guide told me that the horse was pregnant and nearly full term. I was horrified. That poor horse! Needless to say I decided to walk back.

I have to say that this was one of those life experiences where things could have taken quite a different turn and the consequences just aren't worth thinking about. But what I will always remember is that distinct moment of connection with the horse and the innate bond of trust that was created between us.

Mind you, in saying that, I haven't been on a horse since!

8: In your book, you encourage people to change their life in 7 days? What steps did you take to change your life?

Oh that's a great coaching question! The first thing I did was to really take time out to reconnect to what was important to me. We can get so caught up in the external trappings of life and the success symbols that other people say are important. When you're staring death in the face, all that drops by the wayside.

So the first thing I did was go on a meditation retreat to simply slow down. After that I had to be really honest with myself and challenge every belief I had about what my life should be like and what I wanted to do with it. And once I was clear about where I was heading, I encouraged myself to take one step every day.

There is this great quote by St. Francis of Assisi which says "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

And that's exactly what I did – and it paid off! Not only am I a published author, I'm an international one.

The only person who can make changes in your life is you.

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9: You are busy being an author, executive coach, an international speaker and a media expert. What does Gabriella do for fun?

That's a really hard one actually! When you're so full of creative ideas like I am it's hard to stop. I guess I'm one of the lucky ones who can honestly say that my work IS fun.

But it's always good to take a regular break, even if it's just to let the ideas incubate. So I love traveling to places where there's sun, sand and sea. I also enjoy doing Pilates and walking in the countryside. I love reading novels – thrillers and suspense are my favorites. And I really enjoy watching good quality films and documentaries, one's that really draw you in and leave you emotionally exhausted at the end.

Plus, my two cats, Bohemio and Tatiana provide me with constant entertainment.

10: How can we find out more about you?

I'm incredibly passionate about helping people stretch, grow and evolve and create their greatest life. That's why I write books like "Gulp!" and audio books like "Power Up Brand You" and "10 Ways to Fast Track Your Career". Plus I offer Executive Coaching for "movers and shapers" in the corporate arena and Success Coaching for individuals and entrepreneurs who really want to shake up their world.

You can find out more about me by visiting www.gulptime.com where you can:

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