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The ABC's of Work & Life

L is for Legacy



Katie Mehnert starts the year on a thoughtful note.



We live in a world we think will always be here. **But the truth is, one day it'll all be gone.**

Just a week ago, news broke out that AirAsia lost a plane carrying 162 passengers. Last year, Malaysia Airlines lost two planes, with one still missing. These quick, very real events are proof that our lives are fragile and we are all living on borrowed time.

Thinking about death is sobering, isn't it?

However, we are all seconds, minutes, months, and (if we're lucky) years from when we have to say goodbye.

*Too often we allow today's troubles and yesterday's scars to keep us from living our purpose and **leaving our legacy.*** We put off our dreams for another day. We grow into adults and forget to bring curiosity and imagination with us.

We let fear and complacency rule our minds.

We begin to forget that *it's the space between that matters.* It's the people we choose to put in our circle, to learn from, and to laugh with that define this "space". It's the work we do that shapes who we become. Yes, we all take life for granted. We think we are invincible and irreplaceable. And then reality gives us a shot in the arm.

I had my own brush with reality. Just a year ago I was diagnosed with cervical cancer. Cancer is scary stuff. After having suffered from it in 2001, and now a mom and wife, I had a real wake-up call. I decided it was time to live and create the legacy I was born to leave.

And while the new calendar year is a time for people to renew and set forward resolutions, I believe we should throw out resolutions, create and then live our legacy.

What's yours? How do you find it?

I asked a few friends to describe me in three words or less.

I did this simple exercise to understand what others see in me. And I received a lot of data points. A few of these words reappeared the most: connected, driven, interesting, and intentional. I asked myself, *"Am I these things?"* You betcha! My legacy is to help people to be curious and to connect them to other people or ideas that ultimately lead them to make great things happen. My personal tagline is: connect, share, grow, and improve. How am I doing this? Well, my work and the people I choose to put in my life *are linked* to the legacy I want to leave.

My friend Shantera's legacy is to be a giver of love, good vibes, and strength.

I met Shantera several years ago through a professional organisation. She then honoured me by inviting me to speak at her women's conference, an event that brought women together to empower them to the next level in their lives. Last June, she launched PowHer Play, an intimate circle of

people who met to connect to have small, meaningful conversations that we don't have today. *Shantera is living and leaving a legacy of giving love, good vibes and strength. She loves to give, to connect, and to serve.* I'm grateful to have her and her work linked to my legacy.

My Twitter buddy Elizabeth South's legacy is to impact others through her music.

I wrote about Elizabeth just after last year's Oscars. We "met" on the #Oscars channel when I tweeted about Frozen's #LetItGo. (I know, the Internet is an amazing place to connect, isn't it?)

Elizabeth is a successful songwriter and teacher who is oozing with talent. Additionally, she's a beautiful woman with an amazing voice. *Go have a listen if you need proof.* Better yet, buy the MP3 and share it with someone who needs to hear something beautiful.

The greatest thing about leaving a legacy is that you have the chance to begin working on it today.

Yes, in this moment, you can decide

what *it* will be. Your legacy can change and evolve. It just takes the courage to stand for something, own it, and embrace the opportunity to leave your mark in this world. And then, do it!

Do you want to solve a problem? Do you have someone in your life you want to influence? It's time to stop thinking and start doing. We're only given one life! Seize the opportunity now.

When I got sick last year, it woke me up to the life I needed to live. I was going in to work every day and going home disengaged, disheartened, and disappointed. And while I am thankfully entering 2015 cancer free, sometimes we need a wake-up call to remind us that we need to make the most of life and fill it with the right experiences and people to create the perfect legacy.

This year I will launch a new business called Pink Petro. It's this crazy idea I drew on a cocktail napkin 18 months ago on the tarmac at London Heathrow airport. It was a dream I've had to help women succeed in the energy sector. And while oil prices are crashing and everyone is panicking about jobs,

I am living my purpose and creating a legacy. I refuse to let anything stand in the path of making this happen.

We were born into this world, naked, cold and (many of us) crying. And we will leave this world similarly: naked, cold and with others weeping over the loss of our physical presence.

What about you? How are you meaningfully filling this "space between"?

Happy 2015! May this be the year you create your living legacy.

Katie Mehnert is a global talent development and change executive with 17 years of helping people and companies get curious, connect, share, grow and perform better. She has recently been appointed CEO of Pink Petro; www.pinkpetro.com, a platform to connect women and men in the energy industry and advance females in her industry. Prior to her latest venture, Katie was a Director with BP, joining after the Deepwater Horizon incident and worked in various leadership roles worldwide with Shell. She's a dynamic speaker and author having been featured in LinkedIn, CEO.com, Business Insider, and Yahoo. As a work-in-progress marathon runner, wife and working mom, you can follow her musings on balancing it all on her blog at www.katiemehnert.com, or email her at katie@katiemehnert.com