

Four tips for success for women in business

Mumsnet is a website for parents. Listen to its founder, Justine Roberts, talking about her tips for success for women in business.

Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the exercises. You can also read the transcript.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–j) with the vocabulary (1–10).

Vocabulary

1. a passion
2. to take off
3. to give up
4. an unmitigated disaster
5. a light-bulb moment
6. a prompt
7. to embrace
8. chaos
9. to be in tears
10. to grapple with something

Definition

- a. to stop doing something because it is too difficult
- b. a state of total confusion with no order
- c. a moment when you suddenly have a good idea
- d. to accept something enthusiastically
- e. a strong interest or wish for doing something, such as an activity or hobby
- f. to cry
- g. to suddenly start to be successful or popular
- h. something bad or unsuccessful that has no good or positive points
- i. a thing that causes you to do something
- j. to try to deal with or understand a difficult problem

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

| | Answer | |
|---|---------------|-------|
| 1. Justine says that when Mumsnet began, most new businesses were run by young men. | True | False |
| 2. Someone offered to invest in Mumsnet, but only if it was run by a young mother. | True | False |
| 3. Justine says you must never make mistakes if you want a successful business. | True | False |
| 4. She got the idea for Mumsnet after she made some bad choices for a holiday with children. | True | False |
| 5. Justine wears trainers so that she can go to the gym at lunchtime. | True | False |
| 6. She says that women with a business and children should accept that they can't be perfect. | True | False |
| 7. Justine cried when her child didn't want her to go to work. | True | False |
| 8. She loves working on her own to find solutions. | True | False |

Task 2

Match the ends of the sentences (a–f) with the beginnings of the sentences (1–6).

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. When you really believe in something, | a. that's what will keep you going through the low moments. |
| 2. Choose something you have a real passion about, | b. that you have to spend hours on your appearance. |
| 3. Often the things that go wrong | c. having guilt is a wasted emotion. |
| 4. Don't feel, as a woman in business, | d. because otherwise it's too easy to give up. |
| 5. It's almost impossible to fit in everything | e. if you have your own business and a family. |
| 6. Your kids will be fine, and | f. can be the prompts for what you can do right. |

Discussion

Do you have any more tips for success in business?

Transcript

The thing that will keep you going through the hard times is the fact that you really believe in what you're doing.

So my first tip is find your passion. Mumsnet took a really long time to sort of take off in any business sense. In those days, it was all about young guys being invested in by young guys, and here was I turning up, a 30-year-old mum, probably with some vomit on my shoulder. And I remember one guy said, 'I will invest in your business, but only if someone else runs it.' And in fact that someone was a 24-year-old man. So I turned down his investment, but actually, you know, when you really believe in something, that's what will keep you going through the low moments. So choose something you have a real passion about, because otherwise I think it's too easy to give up.

My second tip is to make mistakes. In fact, Mumsnet was born out of a mistaken holiday. It was my first holiday with kids. I knew nothing about it. And I picked the wrong destination, the wrong time zone, the wrong resort. And it was an unmitigated disaster, and that was where the light-bulb moment for Mumsnet came. Often the things that go wrong can be the prompts for what you can do right.

So my next tip is to wear trainers. I think it's a brilliant way to fit in exercise without going to the gym. And it's a brilliant way to catch up if you're running late. I mean, there's also another part of this, so don't feel, as a woman in business, you have to, you know, spend hours on your appearance. Let's face it, Mark Zuckerberg wears the same T-shirt and jeans every day, and why should women have a disadvantage?

And my final tip is to embrace the chaos. I think it's almost impossible to fit in everything you want to if you're trying to start your own business and you want to raise a family. You have to embrace the fact that you cannot be perfect. But more importantly, I think, it's about not feeling guilty about stuff. So my fourth child, I cycled to his nursery with him in a seat on the back, and he started singing this lovely little tune to me. He sang, 'Mummy, Mummy, Mummy, Mum, Mummy, Mummy, don't go to work.' And, quite frankly, if that had been my first children I would have probably been, you know, in tears on the pavement. But, you know, you do get a bit wiser, your kids will be fine, and having guilt is a wasted emotion.

I think the thing that makes me get up in the morning, 18 years on, and love coming and doing what I do is I really quite like finding solutions to things. Being able to come to work and collectively, with a group of great people, grapple with stuff and try and find a solution is something I find fascinating, and it's what keeps me going really.

Answers

Preparation task

1. e
2. g
3. a
4. h
5. c
6. i
7. d
8. b
9. f
10. j

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. True
7. False
8. False

Task 2

1. a
2. d
3. f
4. b
5. e
6. c