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JOURNEY TO NUMBER ONE

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We all start at the beginning, and we all have the same opportunity to succeed. My journey to number one has been absolutely amazing, but it could have been so different. It took me ten years to actually get started with Forever. My mum, Jan Whitaker – now number five in the UK, had been talking to me about it for ten years, and for ten years I said no.

My background is in Marketing – I got made redundant twice – and I was then at home with my children, Will and Rosie. And, my objective, when I finally decided to get started, was simply to earn an extra few hundred pounds per month. I'm sure many of you share the same motivation as me: To be able to buy an ice-cream for your kids when you're out, to be able to take them to the soft play, to take them to watch a movie – those few hundred pounds a month would make all the difference.

I worked really slowly on my business and after about eighteen months I was progressively earning that few hundred pounds, up to about £500, and I was happy with that. For me, being mum was the best job in the world – I just wanted to be there for Will and Rosie. I didn't want to miss their first steps, their first smile or words and nothing could take the place of those moments. But you know, there were times when the car broke down and I wished I had a better car, and I absolutely love to travel, and there were times when I wished I could take the kids on an amazing holiday. But these were just idol wishes – pipe dreams – I never considered that I could change that.

Then one day, everything did change. And it was just an ordinary day. Will was at preschool and I was at home with Rosie. And in between building brick towers, watching CBeebies, putting the washing on and maybe making a few phone-calls, thinking I was working my business, I decided to go and pick Will up from preschool a little bit early. It was raining, so I took the umbrella, I put Rosie in the pushchair, and I walked to the little village hall where Will was. As I opened the door he came running to me and gave me a big hug – it was just like any other day. But then the teacher came over to me and she looked at me and said, "Will's so excited about going to Disney. Are you going to Florida or Paris?" and I looked over my shoulder to check if she was actually talking to me. Meanwhile, Will came running over with his lunchbox, one with Buzz Lightyear on, and she was still looking into my eyes, waiting for me to answer. It was in that moment that everything changed. That was the moment that I had my 'Why?'

I was eighteen months into my business and I had never set a goal. I was just cruising. And suddenly it was like switching on my sat nav. Before I had been taking detours; I had been taking the scenic route and I had no direction. That goal – that taking Will to Disney – became my postcode. There was no room for doubts, and no room for fears.

We all have choices, and you've got to know what you want and why you're doing it. And if you can do that you will always be able to change your circumstances. So my journey to being number one started with that one goal – that was the beginning. And ever since then there has been many goals, many postcodes on my life's satnav, which have got me here today. From taking the kids skiing, getting a cleaner, private education, taking the kids on safari, and to reaching a point of financial freedom. And through all those goals I've seen my teams soar to the top. But at times it has been a rollercoaster, and I'm sure lots of you feel that too. There are times when I want to put my hands in the air; I want to scream with elation, and others when I am struck by fear and I'm holding on tight, wondering if I will ever get to the end. But I've learnt to overcome the scary bits, and if there are times when the bumps challenge me, I just have to look at Will and Rosie – my why – and I know that I can ride through the fear.

Forever, through the past nine years of my journey, has stood secure, they're always there to help and they always have a vision for the future.

F is for faith.

Will was a child with a dream to go to Disney; he had no boundaries and no reason to be realistic. He wanted it, he decided it and we were going. I had to learn from Will. I had to learn to have faith and belief, and I had to learn to reconnect to those childhood dreams. Otherwise we shrink our dreams to our salaries.

When I thought about this, I was reminded of my childhood school days. I had a fear of public speaking because when I was a child I was told to stand on my chair and read out loud. Before I joined Forever, I had a speed dating company. It was quite successful, but in the two years that I ran it, never once did I stand and host an event because I was too scared of speaking.

I had to develop faith. I had to develop faith that I could make that brave phone call, faith that I could meet someone for a one-to-one, and faith that I could speak at a BP. I had to learn to get out of my comfort zone. This business is ninety percent mindset; whether you are telling yourself that you can, or that you can't, it will be absolutely right.

I had to put my faith in my upline, sideline, and the people that inspired me. I put faith in my mindset coach, Dave O'Connor, and slowly I started to build up my confidence, to build up my self-esteem and to overcome my fear of public speaking. And I had to develop faith in the company, the Marketing Plan, and the products. I know that if you are doing the activity and you put faith in everything you do, the results will soon follow.

I had to learn to banish that voice that said you can't and listen to the voice that was Will's.

O is for organisation.

Being organised is being in control. It was simple for Will. He wanted to go to Disney and he wanted to wear a Buzz Lightyear costume. That was it. A simple plan that he didn't over-complicate. I've realised that Forever is so simple, but for years I'd been over-complicating it. All we need to do is show people the business and show people the products. We don't need to convince anybody.

I started to work on the simplicity of talking to five people every single day – even if I didn't feel like it. Before I would have made excuses but I quit making excuses and I started focusing on the activities that were going to generate case credits. I got myself organised and no longer focused on those people who said no to me, because I learnt that I needed the no's to get to that one person who was going to say yes.

And I got organised with childcare. By now I was a single parent, fifty miles from any family, and so I needed to find childcare for myself. Before I might have used the children as an excuse not to be somewhere, but now they had become my reason.

I also started to develop systems that would show the business to people. Claire Spencer and I started to look into how Facebook could make the business go faster. Claire made a five-minute video and we called see the results of it, so we all started recording from our phones, sending the videos to people so that we could share the opportunity with them.

We also started looking at the weight management programme, we knew it was an amazing way to share our product range and the market place was huge. I started to go to the Business Presentation every week and I knew that I would have to put myself forward to present. It became clear to me that if guests I'd invited saw me speaking, my business would grow as a result. We also started an online Business Presentation so that we could access more people from home, and if there wasn't a BP somewhere in the country, we set up our own and the people in our team would speak. As the team grew we started to do team sizzles; they started off in my kitchen and then went to the local village hall, then to a pub, and now it's at the point where we hire out conference centres. We all worked together as a team so everyone was accountable, everyone took responsibility and our leaders just grew.

Will's destination was Disney, and I organised and booked that trip well before I could afford it. I put it on my credit card and the fear of not being able to pay, for me, made me put my activity into action. And yes, we did achieve our first goal. I remember it like it was yesterday: My mum and step-dad were coming on the trip, we all got in the car early one morning and we were driving to the Eurostar, but we got stuck in a huge accident on the M40. And we arrived at the station, running for the train just as it pulled away without us. I was devastated.

R is for recognition.

Recognition is the biggest motivator. It is so valuable, and I learnt right at the beginning to recognise others more than you needed it yourself. Every person, every step they take is taking them out of their comfort zone. It is so important to bring their achievements to light; people love to feel valued. Using our Facebook groups have been amazing for recognising people publically, on their profile so that their friends and family can see. And there is nothing like sending a little note or gift in the post, sending a text message or phone call that says 'well done'. You will see your team's confidence soar by doing that. We run weekly webinars where we recognise people's success, and we ask them to share their story. We then launched the 'Power Team' identity; we made some t-shirts and there were about twenty of us who wore them to success days, and that's where it all began; people loved feeling a part of something. Since then we've done silly things like worn masks, or fairy wings, and today we are all wearing blue to represent all the Sapphire's we are here to recognise. Team identities create belonging. I've never liked being the focused so I've always put my team before me, and that's empowered them, enabling them to achieve things they never thought were possible.

Number one has never been a goal. I'm simply keeping this position warm for someone else to take. Success is giving someone else the belief to be better than you. And network marketing is totally about wanting it for other people more than you do yourself. But sometimes we have got to learn that not everything goes to plan; we have to reassess, refocus and restructure, and these challenges are simply the bumps in the road that are going to delay our journey.

So as we stood at the Eurostar and we saw the train pull off from the station, I was in floods of tears. I had worked so hard to make this happen and I didn't want to let my little boy down. Thank fully my mum took control of the situation – she was finding the solution rather than giving into the despair that I felt at that moment. And we readjusted our plans, we got a different train and we got their just two hours later than planned.

E is for empathy.

Empathy is standing in someone else's shoes and seeing through their eyes. It's feeling what they feel. It is a skill I've had to learn to develop because everyone joining this industry tends to be trying to escape something else, and we provide them with the vehicle to be able to do that. You might have had bigger challenges and problems, but it's not about you; it's about them. Just think about who is in your team that you could have more empathy for right now. Empathy is the key for sharing the business, sharing the products and for building belief. You've got to have empathy for everybody. It's not about someone starting and becoming a superstar within a couple of months, because many of my superstars have had to build their confidence first. If they don't build their 4COs in the first month, that's okay. Because you've got to work with them, and build their confidence and then when they are ready, they will fly.

All of my leaders have got different qualities and backgrounds, but we've all been given the same opportunity. When Will mentioned that he wanted to go to Disney, my first response was 'No'. It wasn't my plan, we couldn't afford it, but then I looked into his excited eyes and everything changed. The world was simpler through the eyes of my four year old, and I had empathy for Will in that moment. I didn't want to put my limitations on the shoulders of a four year old; I wanted him to know that it was okay to dream; imagine the possibilities for yourself if you allowed yourself to dream like a four year old.

V is for vision.

You've got to create a vision that makes you want to jump out of bed in the morning. I was coasting. I was coasting because I had no vision. And vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others. You've got to have that courage to dream. What would your life look like five years from now if you had that courage to dream? For two years I ignored the fact I was told to do a dream book, any finally I did. And when I did I could play the movie of my life in my mind. A movie where my kids were in private education, where I dropped them off at school and went on to the gym, where I lived in a beautiful house and we went on many wonderful holidays; six years later I am living that movie.

E is for energy.

Positive energy is going to give you positive results. What we put out, we will get back. So I learnt to present the business with energy, and to present the products with passion. You need to surround yourself with people that are going to lift you higher; at times I had to step away from some people because they were draining me. I had to be with the radiators for the people that believed in me and the ones that inspired me.

When I was in Singapore for this years' Global Rally, we were packing food packs for the homeless. There were a few hundred FBOs in one room, we were boiling hot, sweating and on our feet for a couple of hours, but we were surrounded with the most positive business owners, and you could just see from everybody around you the energy that was in that room.

R is for rewards.

Big goals are going to bring big rewards. And the biggest reward of success is freedom. It's the ability to do whatever you want, whenever you want.

It was my goals that carried me to the top, but as I said being number one was not my vision; freedom for my family was. The cars, the education, house and holidays are amazing, but what's more important to me is that my children now know that anything is possible. They can now know that with belief, passion and an amazing work ethic, they can have the life that they dream of; they can have whatever it is that they want in their future.

The rewards from Forever just keep on coming, and I am so grateful for them. I'm so grateful for this amazing company and the support and help they give us. I'm grateful to my mum, for never ever giving up on me, and I'm grateful to all of my team. But ultimately, I am so grateful for Will; that he gave me that motivation, and that he and Rosie were always my reason; my why. Seeing them both at Disney was the biggest reward I could have ever have asked for. And just last month my brother came over from Capetown with his little boy, and my sister and her two children, and I surprised them all with a massive family trip to Disney; this is what Forever has given me. These are the rewards we can have if we are prepared to ride the rollercoaster.

Forever is the most incredible company, and together we are changing the lives of family and friends. We are all here for different reasons, but we've all got exactly the same opportunity and the same chance to succeed. Any one of you can be standing up here in my place. Walt Disney once said, "If you can dream it, you can do it." Believe that you can, and I promise, you will.



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