

THE **Executive Lens**

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SEPTEMBER 2026

NEXT ERA
SHEroes:
World's Most
Trailblazing WOMEN
To Watch, 2026

Dr. Beata Golec
Golec Music Studio
Owner

Empowering Women
Entrepreneurship and
Leadership in
Developing Countries

The World is My Library
-Yvonne Wennerlid

The Symphony of

**DR. BEATA
GOLEC'S**

*Life: Where Music
is the Ultimate Force,
and Leadership is
the Compass*

Photo credit: Chrisom Bebee



SUCCESS

“

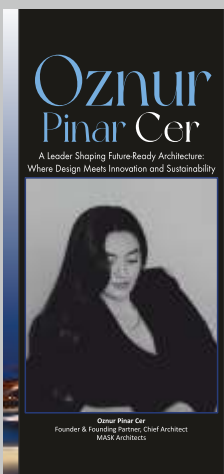
Success, to me, means living and leading with purpose, integrity, and impact. Professionally, I measure success not only by results, but by the culture I help create, the trust I build, and the growth I inspire in others. Personally, I measure success by whether I am living in alignment with my values, making meaningful contributions, and continuing to grow into the person I am called to be. For me, success is not just achievement. It is alignment.

”

DUSTIN
JONES



EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Oznur Pinar Cer
A Leader Shaping Future-Ready Architecture:
Where Design Meets Innovation and Sustainability

Oznur Pinar Cer
Founder & Founding Partner, Chief Architect
MASK Architects

A visionary leader at the intersection of cutting-edge design, future-ready innovation, and sustainable practice, **Oznur Pinar Cer** is the Founding Partner, Chief Architect of MASK Architects in Istanbul, an internationally-recognized Turkish architect, interior, designer, and strategist. Known as a visionary in Turkey, she is well-known for her pioneering work that merges architecture, technology, and sustainability through innovative building spaces, futuristic designs, and eco-driven solutions. Her extensive experience, upwards concepts, and global publications position her as a leading voice shaping the future of sustainable, forward-thinking architecture and design. Her experience with the renowned Oak Ridge National Laboratory also drove her professional journey and highlights her commitment to the integration of technology and innovation for career paths, sustainable practices, personal and professional growth, overcoming challenges, embracing risk, core values, self-care, major influences, operations, habits, success stories, and more.

What inspired you to pursue your current career path, and how has your journey shaped your professional approach?

For me, this path begins with **being human**. It comes from sensitivity, awareness, observing the world, paying attention to both positive and negative conditions around us, and asking: *How can I contribute?*

This awareness, combined with curiosity and a desire to solve problems, formed the foundation of my professional direction. I have always been drawn to groundbreaking minds and visionary thinking. Since I am architect, I have admired the works and intentions of the great geniuses of history — **Leonardo da Vinci** was always a profound inspiration for me. His ability to imagine the future long before others recognized its value resonates with me deeply. In a similar way, I believe we are designing the **future today**, often creating things whose true importance will be understood later. For me, this is the essence of timelessness, and in many ways, also the true essence of sustainability — that the ideas and structures we create, can endure for many years. When I look at the house of **Le Corbusier**, I see wisdom and endurance, not chasing with design and design, motivated by time. That customer inspires me deeply. I hope for me to carry this same feeling — to have a life of its own, to remain meaningful, to continue creating and serving for many long years.

From a very early age, I felt an emotional connection with space — not only how they looked, but how they shaped human emotion, behavior, and identity. Architecture, for me, was never simply about constructing buildings; it was about creating experiences, meaning, and cultural value. My journey has taken me across different countries, cultures, and disciplines, and through this, I learned that innovation is not an aesthetic choice — it is a responsibility. Today, together with my co-founder and partner, **Orhan Pinar**, we lead MASK Architects with its philosophy of “**innovate and inspire**”.

We believe architecture must go beyond form; it must **enable technology, sustainability, creative, and human well-being**.

This journey has shaped my professional approach into something **holistic, multidisciplinary, and deeply human-centered** — where design becomes not just something we create, but something we **learn to, understand, and evolve with**.

Can you describe a project where you felt personally connected to the work and its impact?

One meaningful project that reflects this approach is our **Barakoh Water Tower in Iraq** — a community-based, integrated atmosphere water generation technology. This project has been one of my favorite jobs, but first **listening** — listening to the land, the people, and the silent reality of **water scarcity**, which is not simply a resource there, but a daily struggle that shapes life.

For me, architecture begins with **empathy**. It begins with recognizing human needs, emotional conditions, and environmental realities. In Barakoh, the aim was not just to design a tower, but to restore dignity, to create access to something fundamental, and to show that architecture can become part of the solution, not just part of the landscape. Barakoh is a reflection of my core design mission: to create work that is not only beautiful, **functional, innovative, and capable of improving life**.





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Tushar Mistry Design Studio
Principal Architect

Tushar Mistry



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Jelena Milovanovic
Founder and CEO
BioEridan

JELENA MILOVANOVIC
Rethinking the Future of Agriculture and Biology



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From Digital Leadership to Human-Centered Coaching

VOLKER JAECKEL



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EDITOR

NOTE

Next-Era SHEroes: World's Most Trailblazing Women To Watch, 2026

In recent times, women leaders and entrepreneurs have created history with their brainchild. They have shattered stereotypical barriers and fought many battles to reach the top of the pyramid. Donning their many roles as entrepreneurs, leaders, owners, and mothers, every woman leads from the forefront leaving no stone turned.

In numerous industries, where women were often looked down on solely because of their gender, today, they stand as pathbreakers and icons of excellence in their respective industries. Today, times

have changed, and as women prove their credibility and talent, there is no question why they are at the top and own the title of being inspirational. Facing countless hurdles and juggling their personal and professional responsibilities with utmost dedication, women leaders are empowering the future.

Our recent edition, "*Next-Era SHEroes: World's Most Trailblazing Women To Watch, 2026*", salutes such incredible women leaders and entrepreneurs who are setting new benchmarks with their outstanding work and performance. With their brainchild, exceptional services or products, hands-on customer-centric approach, purpose-driven mantra, and more, they inspire fellow women entrepreneurs and leaders to take up entrepreneurship and leadership and mark their presence.

Flip through the pages and read the recent edition.



Apurva B.



CREDIT



INSPIRING LEADERSHIP, CAPTIVATING NARRATIVES: THE EXECUTIVE LENS PERSPECTIVE

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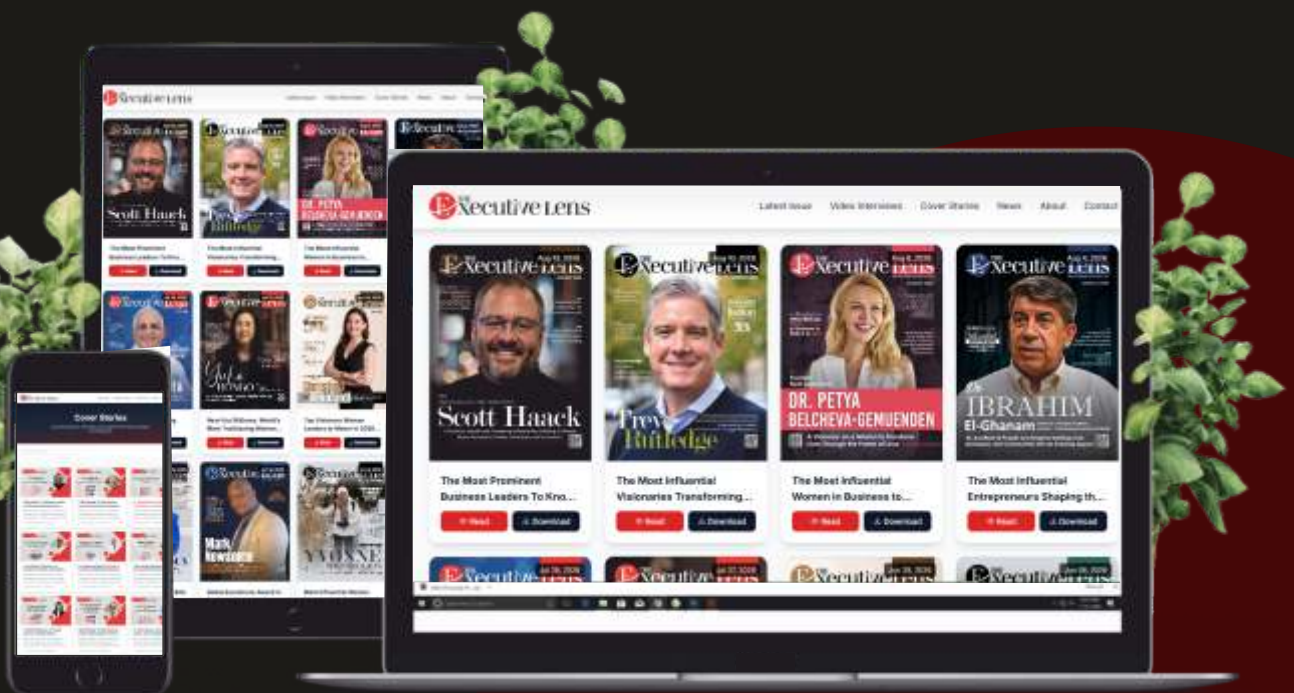
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In-depth articles on executive leadership
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Dr.
The Symphony of
BEATA
Golec's

*Life: Where Music is the
Ultimate Force, and
Leadership is the Compass*

*Cover
Story*

Photo credit: Chrisom Bebee



Dr. Beata Golec
Golec Music Studio
Owner

The Symphony of **DR.**

BEATA GOLEC'S

Life: *Where Music is the Ultimate Force,
and Leadership is the Compass*

Met **Dr. Beata Golec**, a pianist, composer, music theorist, educator and supporter of local community initiatives. She is the Owner of the award-winning, BBB-accredited, A+rated Golec Music Studio. She teaches at the State University of New York and the Rochester Institute of Technology, and organizes Young Musicians' Concerts twice a year. She serves on boards of examiners for Advanced Placement in Music Theory and International Baccalaureate in Music as well as the Board of Assessment Review for the town of Victor, New York.



Dr. Beata Golec earned her master's and doctoral degrees from the Eastman School of Music. She has received many honors and awards for her incredible leadership. In 2020, she received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. In 2024, she was the recipient of the Victor Business Award and an honoree of the Ontario County ATHENA Leadership Awards. In 2025, she was the sponsor of "Unmasking the Silence" Masquerade Ball for Suicide and Mental Health Awareness and the 40th Ontario County ATHENA Leadership Awards. In 2026, she was a finalist for the ROC the City Choice Awards (Best Professional Services) and the winner of the 2026 Better Business Bureau Torch Award for Ethics. In July 2026, she received the Trusted Business Award and the International Association for Business Excellence Award.

A Harmonious Journey

Music is the ultimate superpower. Besides being Dr. Beata Golec's profession, it is her lifelong passion, and it fills her life to the fullest. She feels, breathes, teaches, analyzes, and shares music. The "sharing" part is essential as music could not exist without being shared. This is why she founded Golec Music Studio. Being a business owner is personally and professionally fulfilling. She further adds, "Besides the earning potential, autonomy of my schedule, or being in the driver's seat, it provides an amazing satisfaction of building and serving the community and creating something from the ground up. Being a business owner is an opportunity to forge your own destiny. It comes with sacrifices, heightened responsibility and awareness of the community's needs and wants. As a business owner, I learned to



wear many hats – this includes being a CEO, finance manager, marketer, scheduler and customer support - all in one person. It is an incredible journey, and I love every day of it. I am dedicated to providing the highest quality services to all my customers.”

Dr. Beata Golec is a true supporter of small local businesses and believes in building long-term relationships with clients. As a customer, she chooses to work with small companies who are quick to respond to enquiries, do not advertise heavily, and are located in her county. In her eyes, the direct client – business owner relationship is to be cherished as it guarantees positive outcomes on both ends. This is exactly the model she decided to follow in her business strategies and operations. The highest quality of services and the consistency of excellent quality are her top priorities.

Striking the Women-Centered Chord

Women leaders and entrepreneurs face a complex web of barriers, including systematic biases, discrimination, gender-based stereotypes, unequal pay, lack of support, and the motherhood penalty, while also navigating the “double bind” that expects them to be competent leaders and embody traditional ideas of femininity.

Women in positions of power are often expected to continuously prove themselves and overcome discriminatory and demeaning comments. For women, it is essential to filter through negative and hateful commentaries, separate other people’s

behavior from their self-worth, set firm boundaries, and focus on constructive feedback and relationships that energize them and make them grow.

Dr. Beata Golec has fought many such setbacks, proving her mettle. She strongly believes that resilience and tenacity shaped her and her life's journey, allowing her to adapt, bounce back from challenges, push through gender bias and traditional stereotypes, and maintain the continuous and persistent mental drive to achieve difficult goals.

Dr. Beata Golec's profession (performer, leader, organizer, and educator) has taught her that openness to change, critical thinking, clear communication, and the ability to seek opportunities in challenging or impossible situations are equally valuable for personal and professional growth. Complacency, accepting the status quo, living with the "it is good enough" mentality, and stopping to look for new ways to improve are the quiet enemies of great leadership and growth.

A Synopsis of People-First Leadership

Authentic leadership is based on vulnerability, honesty, accountability, compassion, and respect, and is exhibited through clarity of communication, active listening, and mainly through the way one treats others. Empathetic leadership is founded on understanding the needs of others, building trust, strong relationships, and supporting the growth of others, while critical, despotic, and judgmental "leadership" is short-lived and prevents communication, collaboration, inventiveness, and idea sharing.

Dr. Beata Golec's "people-first" philosophy is the business strategy of Golec Music Studio, where company decisions are centered around human needs, and the well-being, growth, and



satisfaction of customers are at the core of organizational decision-making. Clients, students, and collaborators are not transactions, but rather critical relationships based on loyalty and trust. Through empathetic teaching, two-way conversations, emotional support, and active listening, she acts as a guide rather than an intimidating figure of authority, creating an environment where students feel respected, safe, relaxed, and comfortable sharing their creative ideas. Trust in business is everything, and to gain customers' trust, one must demonstrate accountability, integrity, competence, the ability to deliver on their promises, own their mistakes, ensure that their words and actions match, and lead with empathy and care.

Cherishing a Holistic Way of Living

"I love what I do and strive to live in the moment and enjoy each day, as tomorrow is never guaranteed."



Dr. Beata Golec doesn't live by the rules; hence, she is not interested in chasing a stereotyped dream publicised by the media, but rather embraces the goodness and uniqueness of her life while leading a "clean" life without wasting time on TV, gossiping, or excessive social media use. She protects her family's privacy prioritizing frequent traveling to learn about other cultures, people, and traditions while taking a break from their fast-paced life.

Time is the ultimate treasure and non-renewable resource, and she prioritizes maximizing her time, embracing the present, delegating work and house-related tasks, and utilizing delivery services and virtual meetings to redirect her attention towards something more meaningful and beneficial. Dr. Beata strives for personal and business growth through continuous learning and knowledge-sharing, wisely choosing relationships, collaborations, and projects, and focusing on a healthy family-work-experience balance. Also, mental health is a fundamental component of their well-being and essential to realizing their full potential, working productively, and building strong and meaningful relationships.

The Support System

Dr. Beata Golec's strongly believes the root of who she is and what she does has been profoundly shaped by her family and highly supportive parents. Early childhood experiences, exposure to the arts, travel, and daily experiences have shaped her character, sensitivity, and empathy for others. Her mom, Alicja Golec, who is an award-winning educator, is her role model for empathy, ethical treatment of others and fairness within the educational system. Meeting musicians and artists from around the world and from diverse backgrounds has shaped her sensitivity and empathy for all humankind

regardless of their walk of life. We all share the universal human desires for belonging, understanding, and happiness.

Defining Success

Dr. Beata Golec fondly states, "I believe that "what does success mean", is a question that each needs to answer for themselves. Is money the only measure of success? What if one accumulated enough money to become more than comfortable? Are our vehicles, homes, and jewelry the success indicator? There is so much more in life than money alone. There are many other indicators of well-being and success. While financial wealth provides security and options, a complete life includes health, strong relationships, inner peace, and personal purpose.

Physical and mental health are the core of our well-being, direction in life and self-confidence. Interhuman relationships shape who we are and have a direct effect on our inner peace and mental health. Not having any purpose in life has a deteriorating effect on our psyche. All these elements are connected and form a network that cannot be broken. While money brings security, it cannot buy health, or time, or relationships, or inner peace, nor can it provide a life's direction or purpose. My focus is honesty, integrity, "walking the walk," and accountability."

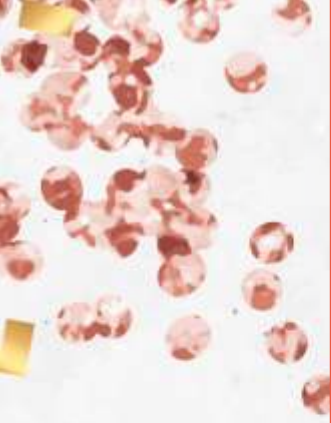
Projects in the Pipeline

Two noteworthy events are coming up in November. One of them is Young Musicians' Concerts offered on November 8 at 1 pm at Our Mother of Sorrows Church in Rochester, New York. The second event is the 41st Ontario County ATHENA Leadership Awards Gala on November 5 at 5 pm at Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua, New York.



Golec Music Studio is a proud sponsor of this event.

Dr. Beata Golec founded Young Musicians Concerts in 2016. The first mission of the Concerts is to provide a stress-free environment for the performers. The second mission of the Concerts is to raise funds for important community outreach programs such as the Food Pantries at Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows Churches. The ATHENA Leadership Awards are close to Dr. Beata heart as they honor women who are tenacious, inspired, and lead with passion and empathy.



NISHA Sanghani

A Phenomenal Leader Influencing
the Future of Business Performance,
Governance, and AI in the GCC

Meet the woman of the hour, **Nisha Sanghani**, a distinguished leader known for her exceptional acumen in business strategy and governance innovation. When leaders lead with purpose and passion, they bring their vision into reality. With her expertise, she is highly acknowledged for aligning strategic vision with disciplined execution and works alongside boards and executive teams to incorporate a strong suite of accountability, resilience, dedication, and risk-taking ability into the foundation of sustainable growth. She successfully partners with clients and organizations to deploy governance and risk management from compliance obligations into becoming commercial advantages.

For her work and performance, Nisha has received many recognitions and stands as a prominent figure in her industry. Her leadership approach is defined by integrity, empowerment, data-driven decision-making, strategic foresight, powerful impact, building high-performance cultures, and more. As a leader, Nisha is grounded in long-term value creation with a focus on human-centred leadership, which helps her lead multiple executive roles with commitment, conviction, and consistency.

Nisha is a recognised leader in business transformation, risk, and corporate governance, with a growing reputation as a convener of senior leaders and a forward-thinking

voice on artificial intelligence and the future of work in the Middle East. As **Partner and Head of Risk Advisory Middle East at Ashurst Risk Advisory**, she sits at the intersection of governance, strategy, and emerging technology - helping organisations across the GCC navigate complexity while preparing for the next phase of regional growth.

With more than two decades of experience spanning consultancy, financial services, and executive leadership roles, Nisha brings a rare combination of deep technical expertise and commercial insight. Her career has been defined by her ability to support boards and C-suite leaders during periods of significant change, whether driven by regulatory changes, market disruptions, or rapid technological advancements. Today, that focus increasingly centres on how AI, geopolitics, governance and organisational culture are reshaping business performance across the Middle East.

Spearheading Ashurst Risk Advisory's Middle East Platform

Since relocating to the UAE, Nisha has been instrumental in establishing and leading Ashurst Risk Advisory's Middle East platform. Under her leadership, the firm has launched a distinctive consulting offering that complements Ashurst's



legal practice, delivering integrated advice on governance, risk management, and complex transformation and capital projects across multiple sectors. This model reflects Nisha's belief that sustainable performance transformation requires joined-up thinking - across law, risk, technology, and culture.

In the 19 months since moving to the UAE, Nisha has become a force to be reckoned with across the GCC. She plays a growing role as a connector and catalyst, actively bringing together networks of senior leaders, policymakers, board members and executives in major regional hubs to drive high-impact conversations on the issues that matter most to the region's future: AI adoption, geostrategy, governance effectiveness, leadership capability, and organisational culture. These dialogues are designed not as abstract thought leadership, but as practical forums to help organisations translate ambition into execution as the GCC accelerates towards its next level of growth.

A Strong Focus on AI Innovation

A defining theme of Nisha's work is her focus on AI and the future of work and talent in the Middle East. She advises organisations on how to integrate AI responsibly into operating models, governance frameworks, and workforce strategies - ensuring innovation is matched with accountability, resilience and trust. With an entrepreneurial eye on AI, she is particularly interested in how emerging technologies can unlock productivity, reimagine governance and leadership, and future-proof national and organisational agendas across the GCC.

A Sneak-Peak into Nisha's Journey

Prior to joining Ashurst, Nisha co-founded Rosediem Consulting, a boutique firm that was recognised as the UK's *Best Specialist Financial Regulatory Consulting Firm*. During this period, she was named one of the UK's top 20 dynamic CEOs. Her earlier career includes senior roles at KPMG UK, a global investment bank, and a FTSE 250-listed wealth manager - experience that continues to inform her pragmatic, board-level approach.

Today, Nisha is a member of the Corporate Governance Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants England & Wales (ICAEW), contributing to the evolution of governance standards globally. This international perspective enhances her work in the Middle East, where global best practices must be balanced with regional ambitions and context.

Moving Forward

As the GCC enters a decisive era defined by transformation, technology, and global realignment, Nisha is helping organisations move beyond compliance towards performance, resilience, and long-term value creation. Through her leadership at Ashurst Risk Advisory, her convening role across senior networks, and her focus on AI and talent, she is playing a meaningful part in shaping how the region secures its future growth.

Nisha's vision is clear and ambitious. She is focused on harnessing Ashurst Risk Advisory's global expertise in governance and risk to help organisations across the Middle East elevate performance through next-generation corporate governance.

In an increasingly complex and competitive environment, Nisha and her team deliver strategic insight, practical tools and tailored operating models that enable clients not just to navigate change, but to lead through it.

Under her leadership, Ashurst Risk Advisory Middle East is building a distinctive platform – combining global perspective with regional insight – to drive sustainable growth, resilience and long-term value for clients across the region.





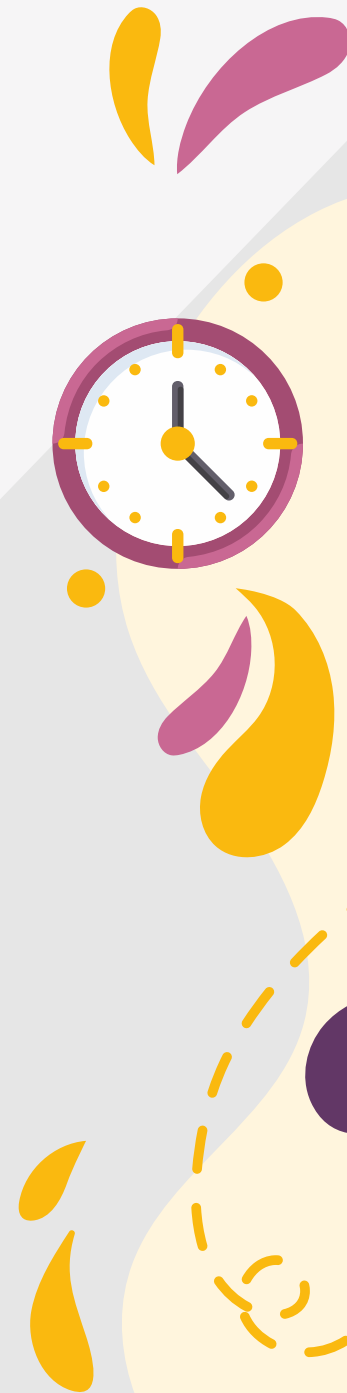
Empowering **Women** Entrepreneurship and **Leadership** in Developing Countries

As the world of entrepreneurship and leadership continues to thrive, more women leaders and entrepreneurs are coming to the rise. With their adept talent and innovative brainchild, they are changing the time for entrepreneurship and leadership. Celebrating the countless achievements of women should never be restricted to a day, however, 8th March is officially declared as Happy Women's Day and the world awaits to acknowledge the efforts of every woman out there.

By addressing the various challenges women face in developing countries, one can find feasible solutions to overcome these prevailing problems and help aspiring women leaders and entrepreneurs reach their full potential.

Integrating Effective Educational Programs and Initiatives

Education plays a vital role in uplifting society and community, and bringing holistic awareness. By conducting workshops, various development programs and initiatives, budding women leaders and entrepreneurs will get enough exposure to understand their abilities and interests. Established women leaders and entrepreneurs can provide





insightful knowledge to fellow women professionals and help them kickstart their professional journey. Such type of practical experiences help women to boost their confidence and also encourage them to keep learning continuously. The organizations and government authorities organizing such initiatives should keep educational wages at a cost-effective price so that many women are ready to invest in leadership development programs. These programs are a key driver for women to sharpen their skills and mindset with technical qualities such as decision-making, strategic thinking, revenue management, business planning, and more. By providing customized coaching, peer support, and end-to-end assistance at every step of their educational journey, women can flourish in their professional path.

Shattering Barriers Related to Gender Biases

To date, women face gender biases in their workplace especially when an industry is completely dominated by males. There are many industries like law or real estate, where even though women leaders are marking their footprint, it comes at a cost. They face many discriminations and are often looked down upon even if women are equally talented and can serve their roles with utmost dedication. Hence, for comprehensive growth of a respected industry and economy, women should be treated equally. For any role, be it executive or senior, the decisions should be based on merit and not gender.

To reduce biases, organizations and government authorities should invest time and effort in training employees to recognize any signs of biases and also create laws to reduce them completely from the workplace. To navigate gender-related challenges, organizations should incorporate ground-level measures such as effective communication and practising emotional communication. With the help of gender equality initiatives, more women leaders will prosper in their roles and the future will experience a more inclusive and collaborative workplace culture with zero biases.

Connecting Women with Fellow Experienced Women Leaders and Mentors

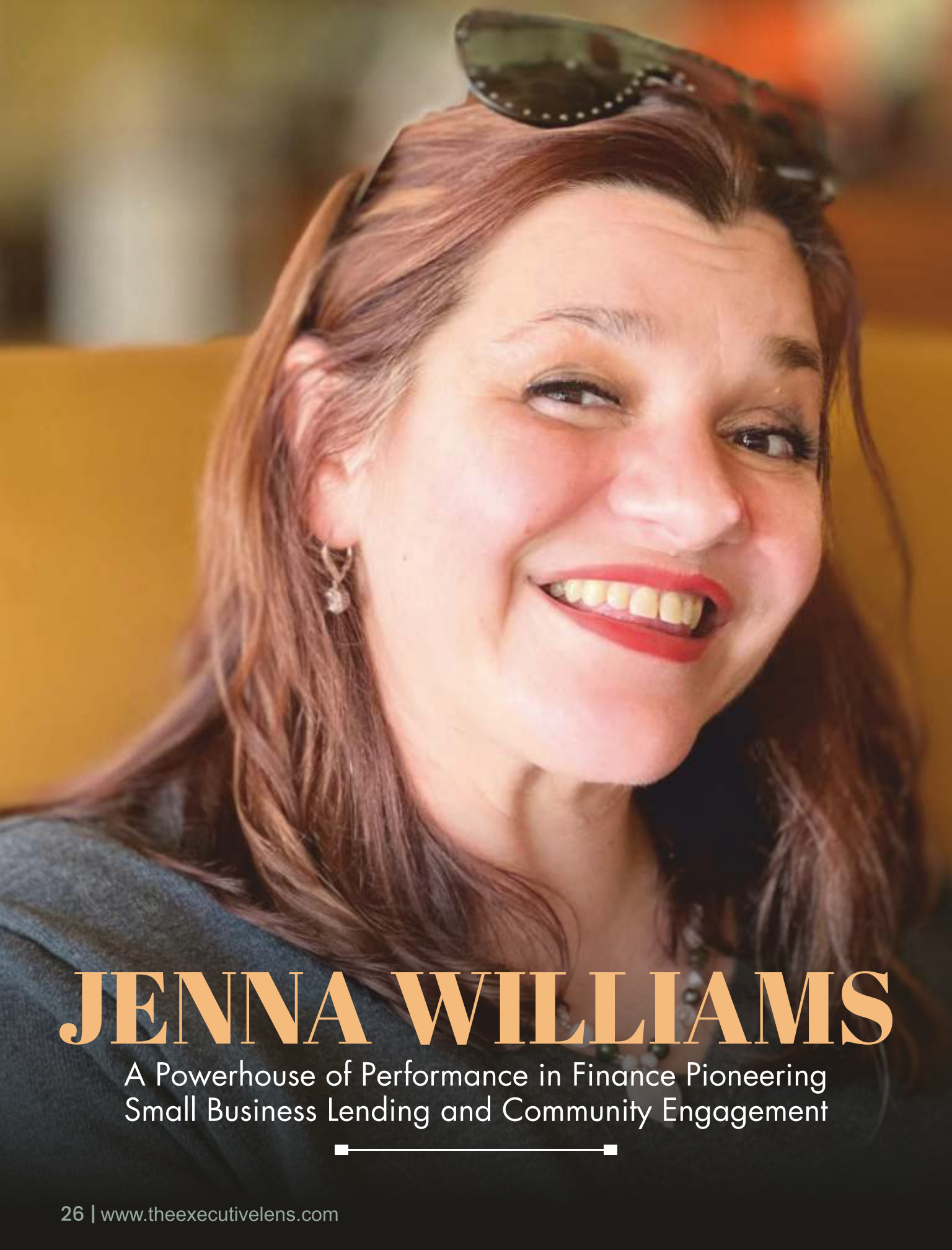
For many young women leaders, their role models or sources of inspiration are other esteemed women leaders from their respective industries. Additionally, many successful women leaders and entrepreneurs are willing to help fellow budding women leaders and entrepreneurs by sharing their professional experiences and also acting as mentors to them. Mentorship is an ideal way to guide while offering advice and providing essential support.

With the help of experienced mentors, ambitious women leaders can pursue and achieve significant leadership positions. Mentors are most likely to provide career guidance, build confidence, expand their vision, grow their network, and more. The demonstrated women leaders are powerful assets to inspire and motivate future generations of women leaders and entrepreneurs and support their long-term career growth.

This Women's Day, let's be a part of something big. Let's create an impact and mark a change for aspiring women leaders and entrepreneurs in their careers. Women leaders are an integral part of an economy, and by helping them, one can set an example of celebrating this day with much meaningful significance. 🌸

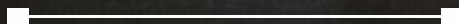






JENNA WILLIAMS

A Powerhouse of Performance in Finance Pioneering
Small Business Lending and Community Engagement



Once you have reached the top of your professional journey, people often ask how you first stumbled upon your career path. Why did you choose what you do currently? Well, for some, it's merely an opportunity that they grabbed and for others, it's their passion and perseverance to do what they love the most and pursue it as a career. Such is the inspiring story of Jenna Williams, a **Relationship Banker** in Northern California. She lives by a Maya Angelou quote-*"People will forget what you say, forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel"*.

When someone asked her why she went into sales, Jenna's answer was *"I don't know how I knew it, but I wanted to be a salesperson. I guess they say do what you love, and what you have a passion for. I liked talking to people, their businesses, and their stories and sharing mine"*.

Jenna's Extraordinary Career Trajectory

With hard work comes success and Jenna's professional career path is an example of turning dreams into reality. At every step of her journey, she has fulfilled each of her roles with integrity and immense dedication leading to excellence in the long run. Jenna's professional journey started at 18, her first job was working in the restaurant industry, where she gained recognition for her work and secured the title of a top product seller. After experiencing the taste of success at an early stage of her career, her passion for sales escalated and she shifted her gears into a sales career. From 1998 to 2003, she worked at Silicon Maps, Inc., as a sales and project manager, where she polished her skills in customer relations and project management. Later, she moved to Inter-Tel gaining much knowledge about the communications industry.

On the personal forefront, Jenna started her family, spent time with her children, and made their former years memorable. After a hiatus, she began her second inning by re-entering the professional world with Wells Fargo in 2007. In the following years, she served multiple roles in the banking sector, built her acumen, and earned a reputation for herself in the industry. In 2021, Jenna transitioned to Community Banking,

refining her skills in commercial lending, her next role was at Fremont Bank, where she excelled as a Relationship Manager. In 2023-2025, she spent two years in speciality finance as an SBA finally moving back to Relationship Management serving to educate and assist businesses in her community gaining access to capital + services to become efficient which offers her a good balance between her professional ambitions and personal life.

Empowering Fellow Women Professionals in the Industry

As a woman leader, Jenna believes her contribution to supporting other women professionals is of paramount importance. She is actively involved with Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) and served in multiple board roles, including DEI Director, Programs Committee, Membership Committee, and her current position as Relationship Banker. Her commitment to CREW reflects her belief in the importance of women supporting women, a cause she deeply values. Additionally, Jenna is actively involved with Calpaws K9 Rescue (A German Shepherd Dog Rescue), reflecting her broader commitment to civic engagement and community service. *"The joy in giving back and lifting others gives me strength,"* she reflects, demonstrating her belief in the positive energy that comes from paying it forward.

The Wall of Achievement

In her long career of two decades, Jenna has won many prestigious awards and accolades for her performance and comprehensive work in the banking and financial services industry. For her expertise and leadership, she was recognized by Marquis Who's Who of Professionals.

Women for Business, Finance, and Leadership. In 2024, she was named a Top Small Business Administration Specialist of the Year by IAOTP's annual awards gala at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville. Stephanie Cirami, President of the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP), praised Jenna, stating, *"Choosing Ms. Williams for this honour was an easy decision for our panel to make. She is*

inspirational, influential, and a true visionary and thought leader." In 2020, IAOTP awarded Jenna with Empowered Woman of the Year. She has also been featured in leading magazines across the globe for women, leadership, entrepreneurship editions, and more.

An All-Inclusive Approach

Jenna's success is a story of resilience, immense hard work, and constant motivation to achieve each goal at every step of the journey. At a young age, she was intrigued by mathematics, which naturally evolved into a talent for banking and investing. She is tremendously grateful for the multiple opportunities that came her way and till today remains committed to working hard and leveraging her expertise for the benefit of her clients.

Apart from the finance and banking sector, Jenna's acumen in real estate is phenomenal. She has embarked on a journey of self-investment by acquiring various rental properties, with plans to expand this venture in the coming years. She has successfully applied her knowledge to her investments, acquiring residential and commercial properties in California and Nevada. In the future, she aims to own more than 20 properties by the time she retires, a testament to her ambitious nature and strategic mindset.

Apart from her professional life, Jenna enjoys playing golf, gardening, cooking, and indulging herself in activities that keep her active and happy. She reckons personal well-being is as important as professional pursuits, hence she dedicates time to her well-being practising the pranayama yogic technique, which focuses on breath regulation. This practice reflects her holistic approach to life, balancing professional ambitions with personal fulfilment.

Jenna is a people person fond of all the relationships she has nurtured along the way. She values the connections she has built and remains open to forming new ones, ensuring a dynamic and enriched career and personal life. Her story is one of passion, resilience, and a relentless drive to achieve excellence while maintaining a grounded and balanced life.

Jenna's Golden Piece of Advice from Her Valuable Experiences

Jenna offers precious advice for future leaders and entrepreneurs in banking and financial services. Here are some key growth drivers to focus on, she pens:

- **Give Wings to Your Passion:** I believe, one should find what excites them the most and turn their passion/hobby into their career. Channel your passion into developing expertise and excelling in your respected industry.
- **Embrace Integrity and Dedication:** Be a follower upholding the highest standards of integrity and commit fully to your goals. Your reputation as a reliable and trustworthy professional will be your greatest asset.
- **Strike a Balance between Professional and Personal Life:** Maintain a balance between career and personal life. Pursue hobbies and activities that bring joy and contribute to overall well-being.
- **Invest in Yourself:** Continuously seek opportunities for learning and growth. Stay updated on industry trends and acquire new skills and knowledge by actively participating in various courses and more.
- **Be a Visionary:** Set clear objectives for professional and personal achievements. Ambitious goals will drive efforts and provide direction. Pave your unique path. Build and Nurture Relationships: Cultivate strong relationships with clients, colleagues, and industry peers. Genuine connections built on respect and support are most rewarding.
- **Give Back to the Community:** Engage in community service and support causes that resonate with you. Civic contributions will enrich your life and enhance your professional reputation.
- **Find and Be a Mentor:** Mentorship plays a crucial role in professional growth. Having a mentor provides valuable experience and

guidance while being a mentor allows you to honor your journey by helping others develop.

I believe in the significance of mentorship in shaping one's career and personal development. As Bob Proctor wisely noted, "*A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you, than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you.*"

A Journey to Remember

To sum it up, Jenna's journey from working at a restaurant to becoming a demonstrated leader in banking highlights a remarkable blend of passion, purpose, courage, and motivation. Her professional journey is a representation of not only her exceptional professional talents but also her commitment to personal growth, community involvement, and mentorship. She has set a benchmark for aspiring leaders and entrepreneurs in the financial sector by constantly making an effort to shine in her personal and professional life. With her profound experience, she has managed the art of balancing her career and personal life. Today, she stands as a role model for others in the finance sector.

As a visionary leader, Jenna is driven by her ambition to mark a lasting impact on the community and the lives of others. In the future, she is focused on inspiring those around her, helping small business owners, and mentoring the young minds of tomorrow.





Victoria Ajoku
Fan Maker & Master of Arts
Fan The Glory With Tori

Victoria Ajoku

**An Esteemed Artist Keeping
the Art of Fan-Making
Alive and Abundant**

For Victoria Ajoku, a **Professional Fan Maker, Master of Arts, and the UK's Ambassador of the craft and teaching of Fan Making**, her creative pursuit of fan making goes beyond representing an art form; it is, moreover, rekindling a heritage craft. She wanted to bring back the art form of fan-making in the UK, with her brainchild. Hence, she established her multi award-winning business '**Fan the Glory With Tori**'.

With a Master of Arts in Performance and Creative Research, as a former performing arts student, she has a profound appreciation for props used on stage, especially for fans. Hence, she started 'Fan The Glory With Tori' in 2019 as a positive, proactive answer to her discovery that fan-making is a critically endangered craft in the UK. Since then, it has been a challenging journey for Victoria. Be it assimilating the right tools and methods that will help her to stay empowered in educating audiences, or making them understand that fans are not just seasonal throw away objects, but revered as decorative pieces of art, displayed in one's home in the same manner as paintings and pictures have all been challenging experiences.

However, six years later, Victoria is still teaching online and in-person workshops, as one-on-one and group sessions. Additionally, 'Fan The Glory With Tori' trades in making handmade fans (and other handmade bespoke fan-related accessories) via the online boutique, craft markets, and art fairs. Her journey has taken a full circle from the joys of collecting fans on her European travels to now expanding her vision with her business. Victoria has come a long way and has a long way to go too, in which she is very excited about.

Keeping the Inspiration and Intent Alive

With a passion for making, Victoria believes that in recent years the profession of crafts has taken a back seat, and interests have shifted to movies, video games, and other forms of hi-tech entertainment. Understanding the need of the hour and perhaps the need of the decade, Victoria rose to action when she saw that the heritage skills of handicrafts are in danger of being forgotten. She desperately wanted to rekindle the sense of amazement, inspiring the new generation to become enthusiastic about crafts in innovative ways. Victoria's ultimate motivation behind pursuing her current profession is to be a charismatic advocate for more diversity in the craft of fan-making. She wants to revitalise an interest among emerging artists in the learning and teaching of traditional arts, and passing them on to the next generation.

When Art Moves Beyond Geographical Boundaries

In 2024, Victoria took fan-making workshops in Amsterdam for the '*Ambacht in Bleed Festival*'. This was the first time that a UK Fan Maker facilitated a class overseas for a public craft festival. Equally, the 'Fan The Glory With Tori' 5th Anniversary celebration held in 2024 was a win-win situation. The occasion was a fun, community event to thank all the supporters over the years. Victoria was delighted to see attendees come together to give speeches, decorating their fans to take home, creating memories, and stimulating further creativity.

Moreover, Victoria believes the art of fan making should be widely accessible, for people of all ages, walks of life,



ethnicities and abilities to feel warmly invited to try the craft in a safe and nurturing environment, where all participants are genuinely treated as equals and where art brings people together to celebrate life.

The Key Takeaway- Don't Quit

At the very beginning of Victoria's career, she faced rejection, making it a hard time for her. However, the positive turning point was when she realised that her experiences were similar to the famous American Fable 'The Little Red Hen'. The morals of the story completely changed her trajectory, not to quit. One may feel alone to begin with, but the rewards in the end will be hugely satisfying. Facing setbacks from time to time is inevitable; nobody can permanently escape from them. When challenges arise, Victoria looks to stretch herself by seeking new collaborations. She finds it keeps her work visible and ideas fresh, which results in a major motivation boost, acting as her key guide to keep going and growing.

Breezing a Balance between Work and Life

Victoria dedicates an even number of hours towards both her personal and professional life.

Building and being in positive environments is a must for success. Knowing and sticking to the desired hours of work is important. Setting boundaries is essential; office work shouldn't hamper family time. Leaders and entrepreneurs should avoid burnout by being mindful of their well-being. One should invest in resources that help them feel nurtured and nourished.

Additionally, Victoria emphasizes the importance of having mentors or influential figures. She states, *"Having mentors keeps me accountable yet affirmed. It's essential for entrepreneurs to humbly make space for experts to come alongside you, with a non-biased view of yourself and your business. Mentors look at your company as a qualified 'critical friend'. Also, I have a team of trusted and talented people whom I take immediate advice from, as they know me very well. My*

approach is to seek wisdom in decision making from several people; this gives a holistic overview."

The Canvas of Wisdom

Victoria pens a piece of golden advice to young minds backed by her wealth of experiences from her illustrious career, *"I strongly recommend engaging with paper-based crafts such as origami, quilling, and more. Other advice would be to always stay true to your authentic self, not comparing or compromising your core values and who you are. Each day is a new day, and every hour, minute, and second shouldn't be wasted. Therefore, you must plan by taking your journey a step at a time. Network! Be present on many social media platforms. Create a cycle of research, practice, and teaching."*

Conquering the Globe

Looking ahead, Victoria envisions spreading her wings to an international audience. She aims to participate in more TV and radio appearances. With 10 years of experience in her field of art, she feels she carries a unique voice in the area of being an artisan, especially as she is one of the only black, female, UK fan makers to have a professional company in fan production and fan tutoring.



[Fan Making In London – FantheGlorywithtori | Fanning The Way To Freedom](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/fantheGlorywithtori/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FanTGloryWTori>

<https://x.com/fantheGlorywit1>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/fan-the-glory-with-tori-victoria-ajoku-54a91718a/?originalSubdomain=uk>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCa2I0akvDB4V4sf0cCFZVzg>

**“I got
the power,
and I’m
ready to
take
over.”**



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THE WORLD MY LIBRARY

—Yvonne Wennerlid

The world is my library Yvonne Wennerlid

As children, we often wanted to listen to the same stories because we recognized the plot. It was easier to immerse ourselves in the story, to feel the suspense building while we were ready for what was about to happen. The person who sat with us and read the story had a voice that could enchant us. Maybe—or how was it, really? How quickly did we learn to understand the tone of a voice and what it actually meant?

What happens to us when we choose different books as we get older? What happens to our curiosity about the world that awaits us? Some embrace it with the greatest possible joy, enthusiasm, and hope, seeing life as an open book full of possibilities.

One big unwritten book. At the very other end of the spectrum are those who, year after year, continue to read the same book over and over again. In between, there are every conceivable variation on how we view the world.



IS

As for me, the world is my living library, and I make my way up the hills with wide, sparkling eyes. Behind the next hilltop, something is waiting for me, and I know that I will look at the view, take it in, and let it sink in. While others shy away from it, fear it, and avoid anything that might change their ingrained view of the world.

I want to weave the world together with lessons and wisdom and see the wonder in how we can learn more about ourselves and the world. Is there any subject that is completely disconnected from another? I think about this for a moment and come to the conclusion that everything is interconnected. Just as all parts of the brain are connected, so too are our impressions connected to what we believe we can understand and what we want to understand.

The world is a playground, a vast place for discovering ourselves. So why is it that some people don't dare to open themselves up to the world, but instead choose to struggle backward, walking backward up a hill with a heavy backpack on their backs? While others see life as it is—the way I approach life and the way I shape it?

Once again, it's possible to change and to dare to realize that we can create our own lives—and that life isn't created for us. Which means that saying “I'll never do this” or “I'll never do that” is really just limiting ourselves from learning more. I have three clear examples of how people believe they're being strict about never doing something they say they'll never do. We have two wonderful Ragdoll cats, Atlas and Millie, who brighten our lives. I would never have gotten cats because they made a mess, took up my time, cost money, and smelled bad. Now I'm a cat owner and love our fluffy, silky-soft, and wonderful cats.

Besides, I never thought I'd get any tattoos, but now I have four. When my parents passed away in the summer of 2025, seven weeks apart, I decided to get a tattoo of how they spelled the words "mom" and "dad" on my left forearm. On the outside of my right lower leg, I have an apple from the apple orchard where Mom grew up and a rose for Rose garden, the farm where Dad grew up.

The third thing is that I work as a class and school assistant at a middle school. I never could have imagined in my wildest dreams that I'd end up working at a school, let alone a middle school. So what happened? A friend at school asked me if I was interested. "Yes," I said. A 20-minute interview, and the job was mine. Believe it or not, I'm really enjoying myself at school and am considering increasing the number of hours I work there.

That's why it's so important that we remain open-minded and view the world as something positive, rich in experience, rewarding, influential, and hopeful. How about taking a closer look at the thoughts we've decided will guide us? What will we be able to take away from that?

What I'm trying to say is that the world is a library where we can learn and absorb things that aren't accessible when we just read the same book over and over. We need to empty our backpacks of our preconceived notions and ideas about how things are if we don't truly experience them for ourselves. Because opinions aren't facts.

So I am living proof of how it's possible to avoid the words "always" and "never." Life can surprise us, and it's wonderful to let ourselves be surprised by being engaged and present.



Yvonne Wennerlid
Founder and Coach
Your Curiosity Path

ZAZA&LILI



Leadership with **integrity, intuition & empathy**

Madeleine Jarl – Founder of ZAZA&LILI

Diver | Model | Entrepreneur

Yasha

A Trailblazer for Diversity and Innovation in Technology

Sterling

African American women face more difficult challenges in their career path, dealing with both gender and race discrimination. This is a challenge that **Yasha Sterling**, the **Owner of Yasha Sterling Management Agency**, had to experience in her journey.

Yasha faced stumbling blocks that made it difficult to join the tech industry, but her resilience, hard work, and passion for technology helped her overcome the challenges.

Instead, she used that as fuel for gaining more knowledge, pursued entrepreneurship, and became a true trailblazer for other African American women in tech. Yasha's confidence is a blend of her unique processes and unwavering vision.

The Silver Lining of Leadership

What makes Yasha distinct from other similar businesses is her passion. She puts her unique stamp on all the work she produces. Instead of focusing on one step, Yasha creates her exclusive 10D method that reflects 10 essential steps. This process may seem time-consuming but it gives each project enough attention and care that it deserves.

Talking about the same, she says, “*10D stands for Discover; Devise, Design, Develop, Deploy, Document, Debrief, Digitalize, Drive, and Devote. We customize the approach based on a client's business plan.*”

Guiding Innovation with Purpose, Passion, and Vision

Yasha's career has spanned over 24 years. Upon graduating from Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi,

Yasha bought herself a Gateway computer as her graduation gift. She knew only the basic concepts of a computer but when she got a hold of all its applications, she was completely immersed and impressed with the technology.

Since then, Yasha has been a “techie” person. She doesn't follow trends rather she relies on data because she believes customers tell you what they need by their actions. When she starts a project, she uses the available data and readily looks for more to go deeper.

Moving with Strategic Vision and Impactful Initiatives

Yasha spearheads a beautiful vision to help African American teens get into the technology field. Regarding the same, she says, “*We intend on offering learning materials and opportunities to gain certifications BEFORE they head off to college. In the long term, we expect to expand offerings into other digital areas, like Artificial Intelligence.*”

The Pillars of Inspiration

Yasha has been inspired by the early success stories of women like Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama. These women aided Yasha with her desire to work hard and embrace the challenges of being an African American woman. They have also uplifted her to help others as they progress through their development process. This is why Yasha takes every chance coming her way to empower and coach consistently. It ensures that she sees everyone doing well in their lives.



Yasha Sterling
Owner
Yasha Sterling
Management Agency

Awards and Accolades

Yasha, the award-winning web developer has acquired numerous notable recognitions throughout her career, including these major ones -

- Outstanding Technology Leadership Award
- 2-Time Leadership Award
- Top 50 Tech Leader Award
- Best-selling author
- Award-Winning Web Developer

Such recognition has helped her to maintain the desire for such improved performance and quest, and provide support to more African American women in the technology sector by giving them the recognition that they deserve.

Navigating Hurdles on the Path to Achievement

For Yasha the most daunting barrier she faced was racism. She overcame it through an extra focus on diversity and ensured she was learning more about diversity to face it head-on.

According to Yasha, success implies a different meaning for different people. To her, initial success was getting a Job as a Web Developer, which she did around two decades ago. Attaining the desired position helped her secure multiple opportunities and continue to grow and learn.

Golden advice

On asking Yasha what golden advice she would like to give to budding entrepreneurs, she asserts, *“Let no one steal your passion. If you feel passionate about something, stand on it! If you desire to learn a skill, be bold enough to step out and learn the skill. Then, continually hone your craft and become so good at it, that you are the “go-to” person when people seek guidance. Believe you can do it, and it shall come to pass.”* 📌







 **THE** Executive Lens