



## From Public Relations to African Drumming

Julie Anne Odell

If anyone had told me five years ago that I would be an African drummer performing in front of hundreds of people and getting them all to drum together as a tribe, I would have laughed and thought they'd been in the Dubai sun a little too long.

But it just goes to show that you never know where the journey of life is going to take you. They say that nothing happens unless you are ready for it to happen and on some level you have wished for it..... and I can certainly remember five years ago wishing that I could have the power, belief, and confidence in myself to venture out on my own and leave the corporate world.

By that time I'd been working for other people for almost 30 years and I'd grown really tired of the corporate politics and "power plays". I was in the field of public relations and I'd got to a stage where I just knew that if I didn't tell "the control freak boss" exactly what I thought of him and start working for myself, I wouldn't be able to look in the mirror anymore with self respect. But it was difficult because I knew that I would have to take the plunge and dive into the world of private business, which can be a scary thought when you have worked for other people all your life. It's pretty much like jumping off a cliff in the dark and just trusting that you will grow wings and fly.....It takes an enormous amount of belief in oneself and lots of trust in the universe.

So I told the boss to shove it where the sun don't shine, packed up my stuff, dusted my new grown wings and flew away on my adventure. It was great because at that time Dubai Media City had opened their doors for anyone with an entrepreneurial spirit and I figured I fit the bill and opened an office.

One of my favourite passions in life is anything holistic, and with a background in public relations/event management I decided to organize the Middle East's first Mind Body Spirit Festival. I booked the venue, got a sponsor and started researching all the holistic festivals around the world to see what would work in Dubai. And on my internet travels, that's where I started coming across community drum circles and each time something would stir inside me. So I organized for a drum circle facilitator to come from Canada and facilitate a drum circle at the opening of my show. A short while later, four months before the festival was meant to take place the sole sponsor let me down and in the moment I got the news, it didn't bother me so much about the festival being cancelled, it



was the fact that I wouldn't get to drum in that drum circle. And in that moment, I knew that I would just have to go and learn to do it myself and the rest is history.....

Now four years later at the age of 50, I can look back at myself with pride and know that whilst many people were going through a mid-life crisis I was in Africa learning to be an African drummer and going through a major middle age drum/life change.

My name is Julie-ann, I have a very successful business called Dubai Drums, a loving family, I am totally empowered, I am MY OWN BOSS, I meet so many wonderful people all day and I get to drum with all ages and all walks of life as I go along my drumming journey spreading unity through rhythm. I get to smell whatever flowers I like and have so much fun encouraging others to smell their flowers too.

And the moral of this story.....

If I can do it, anyone can.....so get ready to grow wings.

P.s. the following year, someone else took the idea started the Well Being Show and funnily enough asked me to drum at the opening of their holistic show. That's when I looked up, winked at the angels and said "okay, I know! You always meant for me to be the drummer"..... the rest is history.

You can contact Julie via her website:

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**In the meantime, GO! Smell the flowers.**