YOU CAN ALWAYS MAKE A FRESH START

...the power of reinvention

A CONVERSATION WITH KELLY BETTS · BY GISELLE HUDSON · 2018

Encouraged by her sister to come to the school she was attending, Kelly started looking at what might interest her.

She chose advertising, and in particular graphic design. She applied, was accepted, and spent the next two years in Canada.

A DESIGNER'S EYE

In London, Ontario, Kelly also got her "feet wet" in fashion merchandising. She had a penchant for anything fashionable, and to this day she is the go-to person for gift ideas in her family, always gifting with the recipient in mind!

Always up for an opportunity to learn and discover, she mastered everything from buying for a clothing store to streamlining sections while heading the team. Her teacher consulted her on her methodology, and they switched roles as Kelly shared simpler methods of execution.

When she returned to Trinidad, she worked in production at the family business, The DocuCentre Limited, and though it was a hard sell at first, she finally got the company to embrace digital marketing and advertising.

Her next stint found her at Superpharm, where she worked directly with their advertising agency. Again, Kelly introduced social media, and married her expertise in design and fashion to create window and end-cap displays that were distinctive and effective.

FROM EMPLOYEE TO ENTREPRENEUR

Three years in, Kelly met James, whom she would eventually marry. He always saw her potential; in fact, he is her biggest fan! With his support, she moved from being employed to a contract agreement, keeping Superpharm on her client roster.

A year and a half later, Kelly and James married and moved to Barbados, James's country of birth. With two clients plus Superpharm, Kelly operated out of a "bedroom office."

She loved her independence and her flexibility, and when her son was born in 2011, she added a playpen to her office.

COMING HOME

They say we should always listen to our customers, and Kelly was wise to do so. Many of her Trinidad and Tobago clients were missing her. They kept asking, "So when are you coming back?"

In 2013, now with a second child, her daughter, the time seemed perfect for a Trinidad re-entry. With discussion and a plan in place, Kelly and James returned to T&T and invested in a home.

That was July 2013, and by October of the same year, the calls had started coming in.

ALWAYS ROOM FOR A FRESH START

Kelly's philosophy is rooted in one sentence:

> *"There is always room for a fresh start."*

So it's no surprise that she named her boutique agency Fresh Media.

Kelly takes about three months to learn about each client as she figures out ways to give them a fresh start in their business. In her area of expertise, she is wary of fellow practitioners who don't take the time to really connect with their clients. She is also very mindful that "less is more" is a great guiding principle, especially in social media.

There is no need to shove posts down people's throats. Be purposeful. Be strategic.

THE COURAGE TO SAY NO

Kelly sees her children as one of the best and most worthwhile investments she has ever made, and in the last five years she has learned that when she puts her kids first, everything else falls into place. It's no coincidence that in the same period she has become better at saying "no" to clients who simply aren't a good fit.

A lover of solving problems for others and alleviating as much pain as possible, Kelly is now hyper-alert to those who want to take advantage of her good nature by requesting freebies or wanting to pay less than the fee quoted for her services.

And while she may seem quiet, know that Kelly is working her courage muscle, to keep saying "no" to those who judge her by her cover and assume she's a pushover!

To recharge, Kelly can lose herself in a love story, her own life a living example, having just celebrated nine years of marriage. In her own words:

> *"What a happy, wonderful, memorable and truly amazing journey!"*

KELLY'S RULE BOOK

It's not always easy for Kelly. She sees herself as a work in progress, and advises others to seek advice. You may not start at the top, but if you seek understanding first and don't focus initially on how much money you're going to earn, there is absolutely nothing that beats experience.

She cautions, though: be careful whom you seek advice from. "When ten people are telling you 'don't deal with someone,' perhaps there is truth in this advice."

Kelly recently moved Fresh Media out of her home and into a small office. With her eyes set on what's next, and leading with the value of always being honest, Kelly keeps her rule book simple:

1. Don't offer things you can't do.
2. You need to walk before you can run!

THREE TAKEAWAYS FROM KELLY'S SPOTLIGHT

1 *Embrace reinvention.*
Kelly's journey shows the value of being open to change, whether shifting careers, relocating or evolving a business. There is always room for a fresh start.

2 *Balance business and family.*
With intention and boundaries, it's possible to grow a business while putting family first. Saying "no" to misaligned clients protects both.

3 *Grow through connection.*
Kelly's success is rooted in deep client relationships. Take time to understand clients, and choose purposeful, strategic marketing over noise.



Kelly Betts

Founder of Fresh Media, a boutique agency in Trinidad and Tobago that helps businesses make a fresh start through purposeful, strategic marketing. Trained in advertising and graphic design in London, Ontario, with a background in fashion merchandising and retail display.

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