



Refugee Starts With £6, Retires As Millionaire Philanthropist

Winning Wednesday: This entrepreneur ate obstacles for breakfast and setbacks for lunch - learn the secret sauce to her tremendous success story

In today's lemon squeeze:

 **Business:** She overcame unthinkable odds to build her empire of success, and you can too

 **Productivity:** Why (and how) you should Capture EVERYTHING, or as André 3000 would say, you can't afford not to record

 **Mindset:** Use it or lose it - how to grow your optimism even when your glass is half the size of everybody else's

 **Five stories** *you don't wanna miss!*

 **Who said it?**

"Success is not the absence of failure; it's the persistence through failure."

1. Aisha Tyler - author, actress and show host
2. Thomas Edison - cool inventor guy
3. Eleanor Roosevelt - American First Lady, diplomat, and human rights activist
4. Rico Love - rapper, songwriter and producer

👧 **Business:** She overcame unthinkable odds to build her empire of success, and you can too



Prepare to be blown away by this British-German entrepreneur and philanthropist you've probably never heard of.

Who?

- Stephanie Shirley was born in 1933 in Germany to a Jewish father and gentile mother
- She escaped to the UK as part of the child refugee program with her sister
- Today, she's a full-time philanthropist with a determination to succeed and share that should inspire everyone looking to get ahead in 2025

What?

- In 1962, she created a ladies-only software company called Freelance Programmers with only £6 'quid' as they say in the UK
- It pioneered the freelance and remote working we all take for granted today
- So many customers refused to take them seriously that she spotted a rat
- Cleverly changing her name to 'Steve,' the company began to take off
- She loves sharing so much that over 70 of the company's 8500 employees became millionaires
- Her company was valued at just under \$3 billion, and she has handed out almost £70 million of her £150 million fortune
- Wow!!!

How?

- Know your why: Dame Shirley always wanted to give back, and it was this huge motivation that drove her forward
- Adapt, don't fold: women programmers in the 1960s - who ever heard of such a thing - no problem for Stephanie, who quickly became Steve
- A happy, thriving staff performs better: her employee ownership model created fierce loyalty among her staff
- And last but not least, embrace failure, or, in the words of the great woman herself: *"People remember entrepreneurs because of our successes, but... it depends far more on how we deal with failures"*

I know, two quotes are a lot, but we love this venerable lady, and the truth is, we could fill the whole newsletter with her wise words, so what the heck, here's one more:

"The wealth that creates the greatest happiness is the wealth you give away."

Dame Stephanie Shirley

 **Productivity:** Why (and how) you should Capture EVERYTHING, or as André 3000 would say, you can't afford not to record

What?

- The space between your ears is the most valuable thing you have by a light year
- All that precious entrepreneurial glitter that sparkles in your mind when you are driving, standing in line, or talking to your significant other is mental gold
- Guru David Allen talks about it in his book "Getting Things Done"

Why?

- He says our minds are made to create ideas, not store them
- Capture these thoughts, and you lose the stress of trying to remember them
- This gives you more focus on what you're doing right now
- Get 'em written down, and your brain box comes up with even more new ones

How?

- He talks about notebooks, voice recorders, and so on, but let's be real, it's going to be your phone, so spend some time getting all that together on your handset
- Set up regular intervals during the day for a 'Mind Sweep' to write down all the important stuff so it doesn't build up or get lost
- Set aside daily time in your schedule to review these precious gems so you actually use them instead of losing everything into the black hole of 'tomorrow'

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💡 **Mindset:** Use it or lose it - how to grow your optimism even when your glass is half the size of everybody else's

What?

- Whether you think you're an optimist or pessimist, you're right
- Optimism is a muscle you have to grow because it gets tough out there as an entrepreneur

Why?

- If you start a venture believing it will fail, well guess what happens
- Attitudes get passed on, and you might have picked your pessimism up in childhood
- Don't ever let that little thing stop you
- As Gary Vaynerchuk says: "Optimism is practical; it helps you see the destination"
- It also affects your team if you're a negative Nigel or Noreen

How?

- Get used to reframing every problem as a stepping stone along the way
- Focus on the solution and forget about the problem, or worse yet, indulge in blame games about who might have caused it
- Make sure your goals are realistic, achievable, satisfying, and solidly baked into the schedule you have for your project
- If you're up a tree with a lion waiting for you to come down, enjoy the scenery for a while

🔥 **Five stories you don't wanna miss...**

- Chinese open AI model DeepSeek V3 just beat the pants off the competition when producing usable code, and you can connect and try it for yourself (if you dare) - [learn more](#)
- Kekius Maximus meme-coin enjoyed a massive surge of over 6000% before rapidly dropping back to almost nothing when Elon renamed his X account after the little-known 'currency' - [learn more](#)
- Generative AI is taking on anti-biotic superbugs and winning in a stunning leap forward that could save modern medicine - [learn more](#)

- Diet and brain inflammation are closely linked to longevity in a large-scale study involving 16 broad brain regions in mice - [learn more](#)
- Plummeting birth rates worldwide have the potential to threaten women's autonomy in unforeseen ways that aren't good for anyone - [learn more](#)

🤔 Who said it?

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It's the wonderful Aisha Tyler, of course. Keep that powerful quote close to your heart when things get tough or even when things are smooth sailing, but you deserve a little pat on the back.

That's it for today's squeeze, folks.

"Work smarter, live better."

Alvin, Founder, Chief Lemon, Serial Entrepreneur, 'that Norwegian guy who's on your side' & Liam, Lead Writing Lemon, 'that other guy' (also on your side!)

💣 PS Don't forget...

How was the newsletter for you?

- [It blew my mind - 5](#) ★★★★★
- [It was mostly awesome - 4](#) ★★★★★
- [It was cool \(could be better\) - 3](#) ★★★
- [Something was missing - 2](#) ★★
- [Forget about it... - 1](#) ★
- [If I could give it no stars.... oh wait...](#)

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