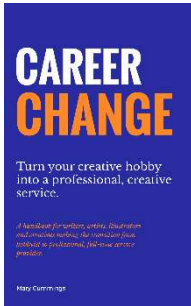


Career Change – turn your creative hobby into a professional, creative service

Mary Cummings



March 2009 – Paris, France

Rachida Dati, an attractive French Justice Minister, sparked a media furore by returning to work a mere five days after giving birth - by Caesarean section at that.

Beautifully made-up with a dazzling smile and worse, chic and svelte like a catwalk model, she strutted around unashamedly courting the paparazzi, incurring the wrath of high-profile mothers who were clearly not amused.

“How dare she look so good after just giving birth, and how dare she dump her child in childcare to put her career first”, they bemoaned.

March 2009 – London, UK

Meanwhile, far from the paparazzi, in a leafy suburb across the other side of the English Channel, a rather chubby, frazzled wreck had

recently given birth too. Only this little momma had her baby safely nestled in the crook of her left arm, while her right hand furiously tapped away at the computer keyboard to meet an impending writing deadline.

I had recently left a high-flying marketing career in an investment bank to begin my new life as a freelance journalist. In common with many new freelancers, I naively expected my freelance freedom to be something of a doddle.

The rude awakening that followed – those testy years of juggling freelancing with kids in tow – was my baptism of fire, and I learned the most valuable lessons I have learned ever since.

- I learned to pare back and focus. You'll be surprised how much you can achieve in just two or three hours when you know it's all you have.
- I couldn't allow myself the luxury of fretting about how hard freelancing was because I simply had to get on with it. This had to pay the bills. So, I learned to kick myself up the butt, step outside of my comfort zone, and seek new opportunities, even if they were a little out of my grasp.
- Waiting for inspiration is a luxury that only unpaid artists can afford. *"To stay ahead, you must have your next idea waiting in the wings."* Rosabeth Moss Kanter.
- I learned to stop trying to *attract* clients and instead, *create* clients by having conversations. You can only do that by creating opportunities.

- And finally, possibly the most important lesson of all, I learned to specialise by ditching the generalist 'Jack of all Trades' in favour of a finely honed niche.