

Chatting Mompreneurialship With Lisa Raleigh

Shawn Greyling

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We caught up with the most exciting, interesting and super-fit mompreneur in the country, Lisa Raleigh, to chat about what it takes to kick-start a business, stay fit and juggle being a mommy all at the same time. Lisa is a pro at all of this, so be sure to take some notes.



From the top, where did all this passion for wellness start?

Back in my school days I was a gymnast, which meant strict exercise and eating regimes. I learnt and appreciated discipline from a young age. The logistics of my schooling meant I boarded a lot with different families, and I gained insight to and a real interest in family dynamics, lifestyles and relationships. This knowledge of health, a growing EQ and a passion for people helped sculpt the passion for wellness that I continue to thrive on today. I studied to become a personal trainer, worked in Wales soon after school, came back and opened a mobile gym that became four gyms over time, then moved into a more public health space thereafter.

How big of a role did *The Biggest Loser* play in your career?

This was so instrumental in my career, and I am grateful every day to have had the opportunity. Suddenly, I was reaching people on a national scale versus just those who walked into my gym. From here, I launched into a media space, writing articles, creating an online presence and venturing into television. I feel so lucky that I had an experience that few personal trainers get, and think my path would have been very different without it.

How important is maintaining a social media presence in your line of work?

It is incredibly important – there is no reach like digital. I take the responsibility of extending my opinion out into the world very seriously. I exclude any mention of politics, race, religion or sex, and focus on providing inspiration, education and motivation to my viewers. I'm happy to show the "real" side of things too – not be simply aspirational.

You had your own show, *101 Exercises To Try Before you Die* – can you tell us more about it?

This was two years ago on Trace Sports Stars, which was an amazing experience that I loved! It was an international show that broadcasted across 100 countries in 11 languages and enjoyed two full seasons. I'm currently working in national television and can't wait to work on an international project again.

Seeing as Lisa Raleigh has become a brand of its own, what research is involved in discovering trends?

Plenty of it! I certainly don't run the ship myself and have a team behind me to help me do what I do. This includes two writers, one who is very research-focused, a social and PR manager, an administrator, a brand manager and a designer. My brand is definitely a team collaboration with a lot of hands on board.

You recently launched your very own online boutique. Tell us about it.

I'm taking great care to only sell and endorse things I love, believe in and use myself. I want the boutique to have a really personal feel and for buyers to know they are browsing items that improve their lives on a trusted platform. I want this to be a very visual site, and that means plenty of videos for the viewer to get a better idea of what they are buying.

What are some of the challenges and rewards when it comes to e-commerce in South Africa?

Budget is an obvious challenge – especially in SA. Buying online has a real risk element and it limits your chances of sales. Exchanging items also requires a third party in the form of couriers, which means an additional expense. The real challenge is getting someone to commit to a first-time purchase without physically seeing the item – second purchases are easier.

Any hard and fast tips for those of us trying to switch over to a healthier lifestyle?

Forget restriction, regimented diets and inflexibility. Those paths are always short-lived and aren't sustainable. You need to remember that prioritising health makes life easier in the long term, and set your non-negotiables to do so. Non-negotiables are the handful of little things you commit to each day, like taking vitamins, exercising, getting enough sleep or meeting your quota of fruit and veggies each day. It's remarkable how effective just a few small habits practised consistently over time can be versus shorter, more dramatic attempts.

Interview by Shawn Greyling