

It's Women's Month and happy Women's Month to all! This beautiful edition of our monthly newsletter is quite a special one. It will feature two articles written by Debbie and Cassie, sharing their own personal experiences and perspectives in the business world, and life in general. With this, Routes Coaching would also like to provide the opportunity for others, both men and women, to participate and reach out sharing their perspectives. Spread love this Women's Month!

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Why do we need to have a Women's Day and further, a Women's month?

By Debbie Wheal

I am a middle-aged woman in 2023, and at times I am conflicted on why we need to recognise women with a Women's Day and further a Women's Month. Firstly, I personally do not feel gender bias against myself in 2023, I feel that women have taken their place and we are thriving! I am a single mom, running my own business, own my own property and then some.

Then, I was reminded of our own biases. Let me explain; recently I needed to buy a bigger car. Being such an independent woman, you would guess that I would do my own research and decide what I was going to purchase, right? Nope! The first thing I did was look around for a man to help me research and ultimately decide what vehicle to buy! I surprised myself with this attitude. This gender bias was also confirmed by the male dominance in the car dealership world.

Since I did not have a man in my immediate life who could give me good advice on a vehicle, besides my 15-year-old son, I decided I needed to go at it alone. After walking so many second-hand dealership floors and meeting countless salesman, I was about to give up.

Until, walking with my children around the Ford dealership floor, I saw her! My new baby, my new car. But she was over my budget, my heart sank! I was about to walk away and go home, when a woman approached me asking if I was interested in the car. I explained that I was, but it was out of my budget.

"Well, good news for you then, because this vehicle's price has been slashed today, as we need to move stock for the other demo-vehicles coming in soon" said the sales lady, also called Debbie!

I was thrilled and within minutes paid a deposit to secure the vehicle. Within 4 days, and with the help of Debbie and Loraine from Ford, I drove my new car off the dealership floor, and it was a completely seamless process!

I reflected on the process. The deal was concluded by all women! Why then did I look for a man to help me with something I am clearly capable of doing myself?





WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

I believe that it is my own bias that was at play here. My own bias that I knew nothing about cars, because in my mind, that is a man's domain.

Let me explain further; born in 1971, I am officially a Gen X. Yes, we are the last generation to live on this earth without some form of digital device as an extension of our being. In fact, although I was born in Zimbabwe, growing up in South Africa, TV was introduced to our country in 1976, when I was 5 years old.

I went through my school life with no google, taking subjects to matric such as typing on a manual typewriter (as I had poor maths marks) and home economics. Two subjects that were absolutely not offered to any boys at boys' schools. Why these subjects for me? It is simple, academically I was probably below the class average on the sciences and maths, so the schooling system had a very special grooming programme for me: become a typist, get married and be a home keeper.

“get married and be a home keeper”

Leaving school there was no money in my family for me to study at any institution, let alone university (even though I did achieve a university entrance matric). Our family was not well off and what funds for tertiary education we did have was...earmarked for my brother. Why? Because in my family's minds, he would need that education to be able to support a family. I would be supported by my husband. Hmmmmmmm...

This is not that long ago! I matriculated in 1988, and whilst that is certainly very long ago for most of you reading this, it is really not in the greater scheme of things. I have fought hard against a system that was not in my favour to educate myself, whilst working. Entering the workforce in 1990 (after a year of nursing in 1989), the only work to be found was administrative work (which most of you know I am not very good at!). I funded myself to study marketing and land a dream job in advertising, which kick-started my career.

Fast forward to 2023, I am thrilled to see the approach of primary and secondary education in how to educate children equally. Seeing my own daughter going through school now in her last year of primary school, I am relieved and honestly thrilled that the approach to equal basic education has improved in leaps and bounds. At 12-years-old, my daughter has no limitations in her mind about what she wants to do. She is gifted academically, especially excelling in maths and English, so a possible actuary in the making. She is of course more interested in going to NASA, which she may well do!

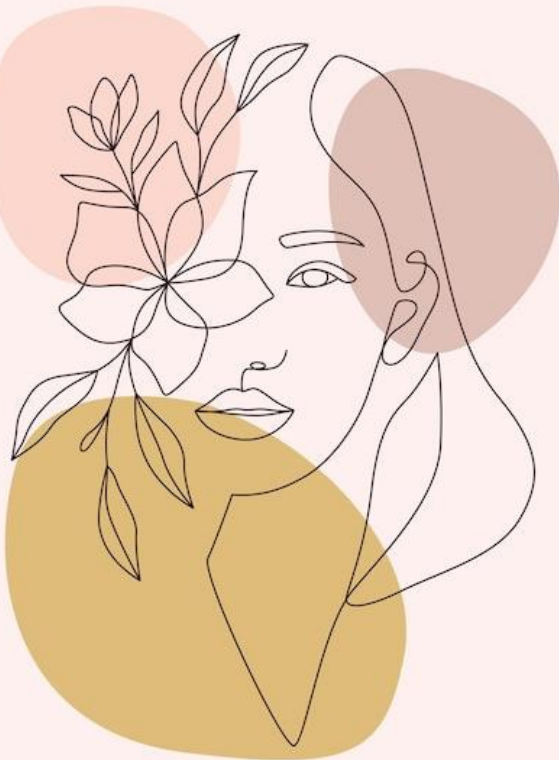
The moral of this long story is that the times have changed, and women now have enormous opportunities open to them, mostly with limited resistance or barriers to entry.

So, why am I conflicted about Women's Day and moreover, why am I hosting my very first Women's Event on the 19th of August this year? I think that these events are actually for women! Events to remind women that we can do so much more than we sometimes believe we can! We just need to believe it and change our own possible biases or limitations we have in our own minds.

In ending, I wish all Women a brilliant Women's Month and to the men who support us, thank you.

A young woman in the business world

By Cassie Quiterres



Never in my wildest dreams, did I ever think I wanted to work in anything remotely close to the corporate/business world. Growing up I had not envisioned myself in the big, fancy office skyscrapers. This is for one of two reasons; I did not think I would have the necessary qualifications to work in establishments such as banks, law firms, investments, insurance and news publications, simply because it was never of interest to me.

Secondly, there is a common conception that the 'business world' is dominated by men, seeing that most to all CEO positions are occupied by men and the vast majority of the workforce comprising men. This is a fact. In Africa, a study found that only 5% of businesses have a female CEO, in 2023. So, as a young girl, why would I think working in the business world was a favourable option?

In my upbringing, being the only girl growing up with brothers and male cousins, I observed how they were groomed to take over the family businesses and that they were the 'heirs to the throne.'

I had never seen the women in my family have their own careers (after marriage and children). They assumed the role of housewife and caregiver. So, in retrospect I can understand why I wouldn't see myself working in the business world, as I never thought that *that* could be an option. Rather, it was seen as a predominantly male career path.

Thankfully, I attended an all-girls high school and went to boarding school. This is where my narrative shifted in seeing women for what they can achieve and what they are capable of. The sisterhood that can be created in supporting one another, pushing each other and changing our views for the benefit of our future selves. Coming from a family of majority boys, this was lifechanging for me. This is the stage in my life where bigger dreams emerged in my teenage mind than just becoming a housewife and mother. I had thoughts that *I* could support *my husband* and not the other way round, and I knew that was what I wanted.

I was fortunate enough to get the education that I did. I was fortunate enough to study an undergraduate degree as well as a postgrad degree, which I know has gotten me the job I have today and am incredibly grateful for. As the little girl in me never would have thought it was possible.

I decided to study psychology because it was something that drew my attention and interest, which excited me intensely.

Knowing that I could possibly help both men and women with their mental struggles, lit a fire in me, and this excitement led me to pursue the path I am on today. When family members and friends would ask me, “*Cassie what are you going to do?*” I finally had the answer I was waiting for. I could confidently say, “*I want to be a psychologist.*” With this, yes, I got the “*oh wow’s,*” and “*how are you going to do that,*” and “*what about kids and finding a husband?*”

These responses led to some doubt and overthinking however I knew it was possible. With that said, the men in my family supported me, and continue to do so, they knew that I was capable of it. I saw my closest friends take the leaps they did in order to pursue what they wanted to do and “*stick it to the man!*” (Quote from one of my favourite movies – ‘The School of Rock’)

“We can see that times have changed”

We can see that times have changed! I see more and more women coming to their own, and owning their purpose in life that doesn’t just include marriage and motherhood. I see women walking through the corridors looking like they own the place (ha ha), and it is so inspiring to see. This influences women around them to want to do the same.

As a 24-year-old woman, I have experienced the world of work in such vastly different environments and roles. As a university student, working as a waitress to earn some form of income, working as a receptionist in a company dominated by men with a male CEO, and working as a receptionist for an all-female salon owned by a businesswoman. These opportunities opened my eyes and seeing how different the working environments were, led to polar opposite experiences.



Now experiencing women in ‘male dominated’ working environments and seeing them thrive just exacerbates the power that women have, and how we can succeed in the business world. Although it has taken a long time, women have accomplished so much already.

Roles for women have evolved throughout the decades. From the beginning of the 19th century where women were not allowed to read or write, and not allowed to attend university. To eventually having that option and sitting in a lecture room with men and fellow women. Then becoming doctors, lawyers, even presidents, and businesswomen pursuing the business world in today’s society.

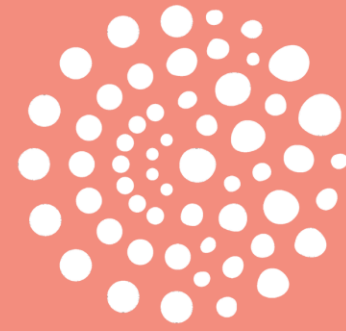
I am intrigued to see where girls of the younger generation will go, how high they will set the bar, what they will achieve and the legacy they will leave. Being a gen Z woman, I honor the women throughout the 20th century who advocated for women's rights, marching various cities throughout the world showing that it was a global phenomenon affecting women from all cultures, backgrounds and ages. These women fought for the opportunities that we have today and have left an everlasting legacy.

As women we need to learn to say sorry less, which we have been conditioned to do on a daily basis. We must keep inspiring one another because I know how much I have been inspired and as a result, how much it has changed my views on life and drives me to see what I can accomplish. It is equally important to surround yourself by men who support you and acknowledge them in your life.

Happy Women's Month to all the incredible women in this world, we are B.O.T.A. (Baddest Of Them All).

Last thought, go watch the Barbie movie!

**"B.O.T.A.
(Baddest Of
Them All)"**

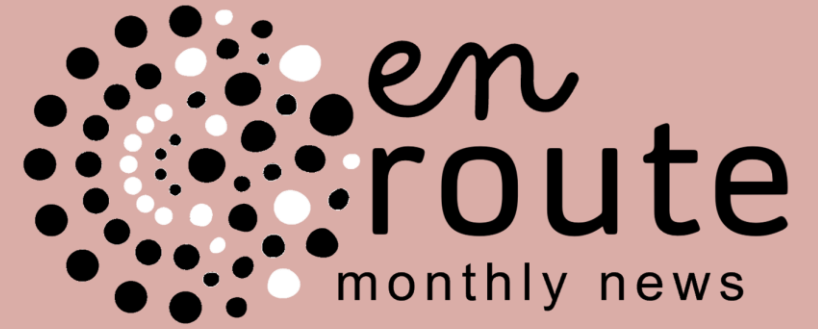


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Women's
**HISTORY
MONTH**

We want you to engage with us!



This women's month we would like to encourage supporting one another and most importantly starting a conversation. We hope our stories have sparked something in you! Routes would like YOU, ladies and gents, to share your stories and thoughts with us.

Please reach out and email
debbie@routescoaching.co.za or
cassie@routescoaching.co.za

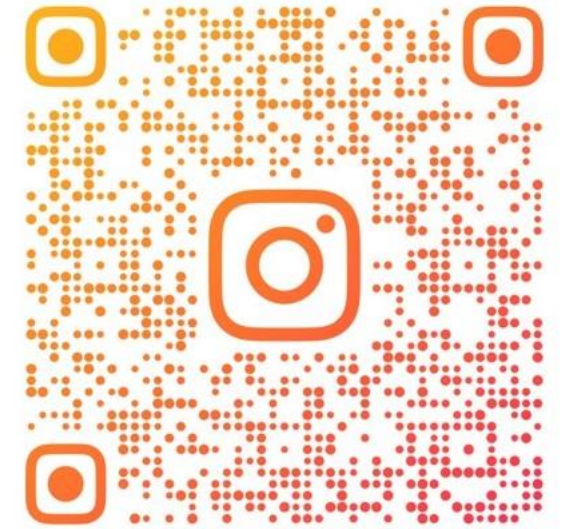


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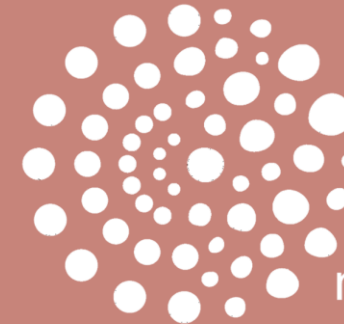
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