

permission to shine

TANIA TURNER

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SOME WOMEN ARE MOVERS. THEY ARE DRIVEN BY THE CONSTANT NEED TO BE BETTER, TO GET FURTHER, TO EXCEED THEIR OWN EXPECTATIONS AND TO MAKE SOMETHING OF WHAT LITTLE LIFE GIVES THEM. TANIA TURNER, OWNER OF THE SHINE BEAUTY EMPIRE, IS ONE OF THOSE WOMEN. CANDICE JAYDE OLIVE CHATS TO TANIA ABOUT BUILDING HER DREAMS FROM THE GROUND UP.

The evening train from Brisbane central station to Landsborough is packed with commuters who are damp from the pouring rain. I squeeze in, wrestling my shoulder bag from between two other office workers, and am immediately crammed up against a wall with my notebook, pen and phone in hand. It's 5:00pm; my day job has finished, I'm on my way home to spend the night filling in PhD applications, and the only time slot I can find to call Tania Turner between her busy life and mine is now. After some wriggling and writhing I find the most comfortable way to write and talk is crouched in the corner by the door, eye-level with a council worker's backside, the phone clamped under my ear and my notepad against my chest. When I ask Tania what kind of person she is, she tells me she is terribly ambitious, driven, unable to spend idle minutes in her day without doing something, achieving something, working towards her future. I look around me as I write and tell her: "Yes. I think I know what you mean."

Mother of three and queen of the Shine Beauty

dynasty, Tania Turner began her journey to success by stepping on to a plane to Australia from her New Zealand home at the tender age of 16. With no money, no qualifications and no support, she fell into insurance administration, a career path far from her true desires.

"I spent six or seven years wandering between jobs, without the background or training to do what I really wanted. Those times were hard, but it wasn't something I thought about then. I didn't sit around dwelling on the fact that I had no money to socialise, that opportunities were going to people who had qualifications that I didn't. When I found myself a single mother at age 23, I sat down and said, 'Right. What do I have to do to get where I want to be?' There was no choice. I needed to find a path and get on it."

Tania tells me that her entry into the beauty industry came after she begged for government funding to pursue qualifications. At the time, she was forced to put her daughter Chanel into day care five days a week while she studied and worked. "It was awful," she says. "But I told myself: this is what you do. When you want something,

you start clawing your way towards it, and along the way there are trials. I knew this would be the first of many." Tania moved into a converted garage in a bushland suburb in order to make ends meet, happy despite the snakes and spiders that infested the surrounds, the car she prayed daily wouldn't die. "When I got my first job working for a beauty therapist on the back of my training, those things didn't matter. I was on my way, and that's what counted."

It was while she was working in this role that Tania met her husband, Joel, in the members' stand on Melbourne Cup Day. On his way to starting his own advertising business, it was a meeting of two people who would not stop until they had what they wanted from life. As I interview Tania, she calls questions to Joel in the background when she can't remember dates or figures. "Joel's the talker in our relationship," she says. "He's the numbers man. Meeting Joel was just one of those incredibly wonderful things that happened to me on my way to where I am, and it wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been out there, if I hadn't been constantly driving towards my dream."

"My big break came when I was given the opportunity to run my own beauty room in an established shop," Tania tells me. "This was my chance to build up my clientele with my bare hands. I started working 50-hour weeks, and gradually the workload became too much for the room I was allocated. A shop opened up right next door, and although I couldn't afford to occupy and fit out the entire space, I worked around it by walling off half the space and disguising it with plants." As she accrued the necessary funds, Tania fitted out her first Shine Beauty salon in Southport. "Three months after I opened the doors I was pregnant. One year later, on the very day I had opened the salon, I had my son, Max. The juggling act I had been doing with my business, my dream and my family just got a little trickier."

With Joel's help, over the next four years Tania built three more stores between the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, often with a baby on her hip or a screaming toddler in tow. The salons, located in Southport, Maroochydore, the Brisbane CBD and Chermside, now attract nearly 40,000 customers each year, due to Tania's commitment to hiring with impeccable standards, employing strict systems to ensure quality of service, and keeping in touch with her employees. "Once a week or so I get into my Shine uniform and I get on the floor working in the role

I worked in when I began. It's something I do so the staff understand that I can do what they do, that I've been where they are and I'm going to lead them with care, knowledge and passion. It reminds me of where I came from and what I've worked for all this time."

The juggling Tania speaks of has not stopped, not by a long shot. She tells me that while she manages her dynasty she also manages the health and well-being of her family, passionate as she and Joel are about living a sustainable life. "You've got to take care of yourself if you're going to live this way," she says. "There are times when I'll drop my daughter off to her dance lessons for a half an hour and run to the gym, workout and run back. It's a part of my need to be constantly doing something, but also my belief in an active and wholesome life. It's something I try to pass on to my children."

Tania tells me that her children have been instrumental in keeping her going as she works towards her goals. They are proud of the business, and consider it their own. "We try to use the businesses to teach the children about doing what you love, fighting for your stake in life and appreciating what you get. We employ them, in ways, because they feel like they're a part of what's going on and their contribution matters. Max takes his role as coordinator and mailer of promotional postcards very seriously. Jade is in charge of shredding, and Chanel takes over in admin whenever she can."

When her school teacher recently asked Jade, 7, what she wanted to do when she grows up, she replied: "I want to work for w-w-w-dot-shinebeauty-dot-com!"

As I arrive at my train station, after calling Tania back nine times over the course of the interview due to reception problems, I am tired, my feet are sore and my neck is cramped from wedging the phone against my shoulder. I am, however, deeply moved and inspired by the restless, driven and courageous woman Tania has proven herself to be. The world is not enough for either of us, and though we may reach one destination, one point in time when a list of achievements lies behind us, our futures are always filled with more. We appreciate the people who walk with us, care for those who give us strength, and we are not afraid to fill our lives to the brim with what opportunities luck and hard work afford us. We are those women who will not sit still. ■

“When I found myself a single mother at age 23, I sat down and said, ‘Right. What do I have to do to get where I want to be?’”

Tania Turner, business owner and mother of three, successfully juggles her busy life, all the while shining along the way

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