

Motivational speaker,
talk show host,
qualified life coach,
businesswoman,
mother, wife

Sharnini Hensen
is all that, and more.
She tells MICHELLE
NANTHA how she
has her cake, eats
it, and enjoys every
morsel.

Savouring life!



Many a married career woman has, at some point or another, found herself at a difficult and painful crossroads when the kids come along: Do you do the admirable, self-sacrificing martyr thing and give up a promising profession to raise the kids, but perpetually harbour resentment and regret? Or do you pursue your high-flying career, then watch guiltily from the sidelines as the maid (uh-oh!) replaces you as your children's surrogate mother?

Or do you keep things at status quo, simultaneously maintaining a demanding career and family, only to struggle to keep your head above the fast-rising water?

Yes, it's exhausting trying to be super-mum, super-wife and super-career woman all rolled into one. At some point, the inevitable happens – you raise the white flag. It's crunch time, and something's gotta give because you've come to the stinging realisation that you just can't have it all.

Or can you?

A liberating experience

Meet *Sharmini Hensen*, the envy of many: This charismatic, bubbly mother of two is living the kind of life many of us can only dream about. She sniffs at the thought that women can't have their cake, eat it, and enjoy it. After all, she's walking, talking, living proof of that.

Besides being mummy to nine-year-old Tashwin and four-year-old Kayla, she is also wife to Steven, her husband of 11 years. She runs a successful coaching business catering to large corporate clients. To top it all, she finds the energy to motivate other women through her Sistas Network, a private coaching-based support group aimed at helping women achieve similar goals.

She admits it gets overwhelming trying to do it all in this age of overrated achievement and material competition. "Then the realisation sets in that I can't have it all, and the hard decision begs the question: 'So what do I give up?' Unconsciously – and sadly – more and more women are giving up on their relationships, especially with their children and husbands."

But Sharmini firmly believes it is possible to lead the life you want. "Why can't we have what we desire? If you know what you want, what your passion is, what motivates and drives you, it doesn't become a job anymore. It's living your passion and being excited about it, as opposed to stagnating personally."

This is why Sharmini set up her group – to motivate like-minded women to make a change and a difference in their lives. "It's about empowering

women. The women in my group put forth their long-standing goals such as a career change or starting their own business – which they've done nothing about. Just the act of declaring and working towards an outcome that has been on the back-burner is, on its own, a liberating experience. Women are empowered and motivated to the point that they can create what they desire without compromising on what is important to them.

"As they experience this sense of achievement, optimism and joy, it will create a ripple effect immediately in their children, partners, colleagues, families, friends and consequently the community at large. Many of us get fantastic ideas and then immediately come up with a million reasons why we shouldn't and can't see them through. I help women see that their dreams are not impossible. Why can't we do it? Why can't we create and live the lives we want? What's stopping us?"

"We are our own worst enemies; we are our own limitations. We create mindsets that limit us. Our motivation, therefore, must stem from what is important to us, and it must be so big that we are willing to take risks to make that change. Ask yourself how much you want this; how meaningful is this?"

No negativity, please!

Sharmini's support group meets twice monthly. Meetings are structured such that participants learn something new each time. Within the group, the women begin to see that their energy is spent doing something worthwhile, and that they are making a difference in their families, careers and other relationships. They see that they are doing more than just going through the workday motions that ultimately demoralise them.

"When women feel demoralised, they think: 'Is this all I can do?' Women get so caught up with their roles that they feel like they don't have any more choices; they're stuck. If you feel like you play a small role, you begin to feel small too. That breaks us down. But the beauty of being in a support group is that when one has a breakdown, the others will pick you up again."

According to Sharmini, there is so much energy in the small yet highly motivated group that new members feel it instantly. She is careful to keep it from turning into a bitching session. There is no negativity; only women supporting and

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challenging each other, and looking for solutions.

"I hardly teach them anything. They already have their own resources and all the tools that they need. All I do is reflect this back to them, like a mirror. I help them look at the situation from other perspectives, put different pictures in their heads.

"You can make life easier. You just need a clear, congruent (meaning aligning your mind, body and emotions) idea for things to fit into place. Think out of the box and step out of your comfort zone. If there's something that you want and if it is bigger than you, you will attract it."

And then, Sharmini advises, trust that everything will work out. "Go with the flow, trust that you will be taken down the right path. Many of us waste so much time trying so hard. Stop second-guessing, don't question people. Stop having high standards that everyone else must live up to."

Before you dismiss this as a load of unworkable hot air, consider that Sharmini was in that very boat herself not too long ago. Her positive, carefree take on life stems from personal experience. "I was in a rut," she reveals. "My relationships with my hubby and kids were not going the way I wanted, and that's when I realised a lot of things about myself.

"I was turning into a bitch. At home and at work, I was a control freak who didn't delegate. I had to oversee everything, get involved in

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everything. Everything had to look a certain way; I was micro-managing, and getting snappy and irritated with the kids as a result. I became an edgy, angry and cold person. I was not the person I wanted to be. I wasn't doing the things I wanted to do. I wanted so much to be a warm, loving mother to my kids, but stretched myself too thin and paid a high price for it.

"One day, I decided I didn't want to be that person anymore; I didn't want things to be that way anymore... I wanted to take control of my life and empower myself."

Thus began Sharmini's journey of change. Fortunately, she had a loving and supportive husband who gave her the time and space to do what she needed, and equally supportive parents. "It has completely changed my life and my relationships. There is no more anger, no more aggravation. I take plenty of time out for myself, pampering myself with sessions at spas. I even walk into a restaurant by myself and order what I want instead of always taking into consideration what the kids want.

"Yes, I do get tired and worn out, but I bounce back a lot faster nowadays. I do feel disappointed, but I don't let that failure get to me. Instead, I look to see how I can change or improve. I don't take things so personally anymore. But this takes lots of practice.

"My motivation was my family. They are very important to me. If you're doing something that you're really passionate about, you will succeed."

It is hard to imagine this woman, so brimming with positive energy, being washed out not too long ago. Yet Sharmini Hensen is as normal as the next woman. What sets her apart is the fact that she has made a choice to be happy. ■

Get results!

As a life coach, Sharmini is trained in NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming). She coaches individuals and groups who want to create excellent results in all aspects of their life – relationships, career, health and finance. Her motto is "When my relationships work, my life works". To find out more, log on to www.sharminihensen.com.my.

Meet the Sistas!

The Sistas Network:

- Empowers women to align themselves to who they are, what they want and what they do; so they can attract and create whatever they desire in life.
- Instils confidence and challenges women to have it all – the life they desire, a rewarding career, nice things, happy and confident children, a nurturing and fulfilling marriage – whilst contributing to the community.
- Allows women to stop, look at what they can create in their lives, and make different choices by changing their mindsets, i.e. to take "ownership" and responsibility, breaking out of their limitations, and focusing on values and what is really important.
- Meets every second and fourth Friday of the month.