

Raw Interview:

Caprice



I had the great pleasure to meet Caprice recently at her studio just off of Portobello Road in London. Whilst I was waiting in the reception of this busy trendy London business centre it made me realise how important business incubation centres are for people starting out in business.

When Caprice arrived I was struck by how tall she is. She has a natural beauty and she is completely down to earth. I enjoyed spending time with Caprice and of course her dogs, which were delightful.

Caprice's transition from successful model to entrepreneur has not been easy for her and I am certain that she has been tested to the limits. She is testament to the fact that you can change your direction if you have faith, belief and determination.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up with my mum in California. She was divorced, independent and a successful entrepreneur running her business called Bourret Interiors. She is a powerhouse, dynamic and energetic and I wanted to be like her. I moved to the UK in 1996 but we still talk about 5 times every day discussing everything from my dramas to business.

What was it like being a high profile model?

I believe in fate and destiny and I guess it just happened to me. I moved to UK because Europe is the centre point for all the major magazines. Between 2000 and 2001 I was on just about every magazine cover and newspaper in Europe. I attended major shows and events and won prizes and was offered some amazing jobs. It was a very powerful time for me.

How did you feel about some of the negative press about you with regards your DUI?

I got caught up in it for a while and yes of course it hurts because it's personal. I got so bad that I decided to enter into a law suit and won! Looking back I would not have done it. The truth is that media is a game and people forget tomorrow what they have seen, heard or read today. I was pretty arrogant back then and it was undoubtedly one of my biggest mistakes and I learned a great deal from it.

When did you decide to leave your modelling career and start your business?

As you know when I was 25 and my modelling career went into overdrive. I gained a lot of exposure from wearing that famous Versace gown whilst I was presenting an award with Trevor McDonald at the National Television Awards. I knew that I would not always be "Hot" and in my early thirties I started to think forward about my future. I can remember calling my mum and telling her that I wanted to move into the lingerie market and she said "Go for it". (Caprice never did a Wonderbra campaign)

What was it like setting up in business and creating your first range?

I visited a factory in China and had my first set of samples produced and I presented to Debenhams who then tested the product in 10 stores. I had offered my range exclusively to them for the first season.

I have since supplied Littlewoods and Next and my range was their bestselling lingerie product in the first season. I did experience some initial problems, one being currency. I was buying in dollars and by the time the range had landed the dollar had moved from \$2 to the pound down to \$1.37 and it cost me a lot of money. I buy forward currency now but the currency fluctuation nearly cost me my business.

My second range had fitting problems, the colours, styles and collection was just not right, subsequently Debenhams cancelled their order. I soon realised that for any business to be successful you have to be involved in every stage of the design, production and marketing process, after all nobody has the same inspiration as you. You have to stay on the ball and make it happen.

What has been the toughest business decision that you have had to make?

Probably letting go of people that were not right for the business - it's awful!

What do you think about today's networking opportunities like Raw Business?

I wish I knew about the various business networking organisations on the market. When I started in business I knew very little about running a company. I have learned through mistakes and research. I guess it must be incredible to have a support network to guide and inspire you when you feel lost or confused. The amount of money that I could have saved from the mistakes that I've made - Oh my god!

What have your emotions been like since you started your business?

An absolute roller coaster and I have experienced the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. I went from a high profile international model to an unknown entrepreneur and my ego suffered in the process but I knew that if I did not make the transition then I would just fade into normality.

How do you feel now?

I meditate once or twice a day or at night and this has brought clarity to my life. Meditating helps you find stillness in your mind. I used to be a control freak and now I can make decisions without fear, hesitation or doubt. I accept everything and I am open to everything.

The bizarre thing is as soon as I controlled my mind positive things have happened to me. I have expanded the business and now I supply Littlewoods, ASOS, Figleaves, Lipsy, BHS and Debenhams.

You still look really good; do you watch what you eat?

No way man! I love my food especially Mexican food! Ah nachos filled with guacamole, beans, double cheese, sour cream, yummy. I play tennis 3 times a week and I still like to exercise.

Is there anyone you would like to thank that has helped you on your journey?

All the people that have supported me, believed in me and encouraged me to continue. I would like to send a special thanks to Littlewoods for giving me a chance.

Caprice - Thank you for spending time with me and allowing me to interview you. I wish you every success for the future and look forward to meeting you again. Perhaps next time we meet we can sit down and talk more about your journey over a nice tasty Mexican lunch!

Kind Regards
Bradley Chapman