

Don't Curse the Darkness, Light a Candle My Party Plan Story



*Fridge Magnets : 1 of 4 designs
from the Inspired Card & Gift Company*

For someone who'd have chosen route canal surgery rather than go to any sort of party plan event, I wasn't perhaps the likeliest candidate to start a direct sales business ...

Workwise, life before children was mostly in local radio sales after which I'd happily taken the step to be a full-time mum to two lovely girls who, back in 1993, were aged five and one. It was a step with a major downside too. We'd gone from two wages to one, a company car to a banger we were funding ourselves, and children to support – so financially things were tight, to say the least!

Life was certainly hectic in the world of the fives and unders, but despite that, when I found myself matching the coloured clothes pegs to the washing one day - it occurred to me that perhaps I should be looking back in to the world of work! Yes, I needed to restore some 'me' time, as well as help restore the family finances. So my criteria for this life-after-kids career?

Well it had to be something I could fit around my life, as opposed to fitting my life around *it*. Oh, and definitely something exciting and challenging. And well paid, of course. Ideally being my own boss. But preferably with support as well. And minimal or no investment would be good too. Quite amazingly, nothing much matched that description at the local job centre. And I certainly didn't think I'd found the answer when I agreed to go to a local charity fund-raiser featuring ... horror of horrors ... a party plan product!

Well, to cut a very long story short, I was bowled over not only by the product, but also by the lady who was presenting it, and subsequently by the company - and then by the whole exciting world of direct sales. There and then I asked to join her, and in the 12 years I was with the company enjoyed a wonderful time working my way from the ground floor through to being a manager with a team of around seventy diverse and delightful ladies.

I benefited from amazing personal development and fabulous friendships, not to mention travel around the world - including first class trips to many European cities and Toronto too. Oh, and of course being able to run a fantastic car, have fabulous clothes and treat the family to a Disney World holiday, to name but a few of the financial benefits.

Was it easy? Well in so far as I loved almost every minute of it ... yes! But did things go smoothly? I wish! I had so many times when I slapped my forehead in pure exasperation at myself for having done so many things so wrong, for so long, for so many times - I nearly called my team 'The Slapheads' ... but decided that it was perhaps not so inspirational!

It would require a whole book, if not a series, to share with you all I've learned over those years that might help you in your own party plan career, and maybe avoid a few 'slaphead moments' of your own! That not being practical, I'd like to leave you with just a few pointers which I hope will help motivate you onward and upwards along with this personal testament to what can be achieved.

The spirit of sharing, support and encouragement is one of the things I found so refreshing in the direct sales world - so much so that it subsequently helped inspire my new motivational card and gift business – and it's in this same spirit that I share them:



Magnetic Bookmarks
Inspired Card & Gift Co.

- Have enthusiasm, enthusiasm ... and lots more enthusiasm!
- Realise the potential you have here with your business. It's huge! Envisage it, grasp it, set yourself goals on what you'll achieve ...
- Consistent action. A big shot is just a little shot who just kept shooting!
- You may be selling 'things' but remember at all times, you're in a *people* business first and foremost. Be the 'right' person. (Would *you* want *you* in your home?!) And go out of your way to help others feel good about themselves with sincere compliments, recognition and praise.
- If you catch yourself thinking you're asking people a favour by having a party for you, then you need a re-think! It's a mutual favour. If you love the product that you're offering, then you're doing *them* a real favour too. Ask with that firmly in mind and watch your results improve dramatically!
- Same with recruiting ... this is a great opportunity that you've taken up, and that you're recommending. You're doing them a real favour by choosing to share that opportunity with them. Make sure that's you're mind-set, and your team will flourish.
- Get involved. Go to meetings. Attend conferences. Mix with the right people ...
 - There are those who make it happen.
 - Those who watch it happen.
 - And those who wonder what happened.Make sure you're taking advice from the right ones!
- Feel the fear and do it anyway if you do what you've always done, you'll have what you've always had.
- Positivity - in bucket loads. Think, act, speak, do be positive.

Which brings me to telling you the name I actually did choose for my team. It was 'The Candle Lighters', after the Chinese proverb 'Don't Curse the Darkness, Light a Candle. A philosophy that certainly served us well, and that stays with me today in the Inspired Card & Gift Company logo and products.

Wishing you everything you wish for yourself from *your* direct sales business and sincerely hope that our website and products will be of help to you. We'd love to hear *your* personal party plan story, or be of any assistance, so please contact us at anytime.



Stay Inspired!

Christine

Christine Beal
and Joanna Flynn
Inspired Card & Gift Company
www.inspiredcardandgift.co.uk