

100
DAYS
OF **How to launch a
business you love
in three months**
BRAVE

Iolanthe Gabriele



MAJOR
STREET

For Yule and Eglé



**MAJOR
STREET**

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Preface

Can you be brave, just for today?

Within the answer to this one little question lies the key to your freedom.

You may have picked up my book because you want to build a successful business and you'd like a practical, clear guide for doing so. That's terrific. *100 Days of Brave* will certainly help get you there. But while this book is about business, it's actually about something much bigger and more powerful than commerce: it's about living life on your own terms. It's about freedom. Building a successful business is one of the best ways to reclaim ownership of your life and identity, because it offers you the flexibility and creativity our patriarchal society's structures and norms routinely deny us. And by 'us', yes – I am referring to women. You're the focus of *100 Days of Brave*; you're the community I want to empower and embolden with business strategy so you can enjoy lives in deep connection with your soul.

This isn't to say that men won't find utility in this book. You fellas will, too: my plan offers you 100% business gold and roaring momentum. But it's women I've written this book for, as it's women who are under the double burden of a fantasy our Western community

has foisted upon us. You know the one I'm talking about: the dirty fantasy that YOU CAN DO IT ALL.

I went to a prestigious private girls' school with a focus on academic integrity and grrrrlll power, '90s style. In an era of Spice Girls feminism, the environment I was raised in demanded excellence and the astronomical marks to attend Australia's version of an Ivy League university. From there, we could be anything we wanted: lawyers, doctors, lawyers. (Did I mention lawyers twice? Oops, I'm sorry. It really was drilled into us!) We could be wives and mothers, too, at an appropriate time (somewhere between the ages of 28 and 31, give or take – any earlier and you were an unfortunate; any later, at the risk of spinsterhood and infertility). Like my girlfriends, I wanted to succeed academically. While I mistakenly thought being an academic would be the route I'd take, many of my friends wanted careers in suits in large corporations. Winning careers in highly competitive (and often male-dominated) industries is still viewed as the coup de grâce for most privileged women.

The subtext to this fantasy is this: you've really made it once a large corporation has accepted you.

The behaviour you exhibit: behave as a man would to succeed within his world.

This kind of relentless career will be familiar to many of you reading this. It consists of gym-sessions at 5.30 a.m. to keep dat body right (because the relative size of your body correlates with your sense of discipline and control, naturally). It means being in the office at 7.30 a.m. – extra-large, extra-extra-strong long black in hand – to beat the boss. It means excruciatingly long hours and anxiety-inducing travel duties in a job that has become passionless (yet financially grows ever more lucrative the longer you're in the trenches). And it means dulling your worries and tiredness with a fat glass of red wine with 'the team' before you leave the office to go home at 7 p.m.

Can you be brave, just for today?

The reality: you're working for The Man.

And that's no way to freedom. Choose to work for the woman.

(That's you, BTW.)

A life working for The Man is not very fulfilling. It's also unsustainable, as many of you will realise once the vagaries of the real world and your biology begin to knock upon your door. The dissonance between the kind of person you need to be to enjoy society's approval and the kind of person you ACTUALLY are results in what is becoming known as a quarter-life crisis. It hits women hard in particular, and it takes them out of the game in droves once they have children. That's because – despite lip-service to the contrary – women are generally still the heavy lifters when it comes to domestic life.

They cook the dinners, pack the lunches, buy the gifts, clean the house, clothe the children and arrange the logistics around school drop-offs and pick-ups. Simultaneously, they're also expected to take care of their aging parents, organising everything from geriatrician appointments to ensuring Nana is included in Christmas plans (even when she lives three hours away). And at work? At work, in order for her to be accepted by her male peers, she must arrive, leave and perform as if she had NONE of the domestic responsibilities she shoulders.

This taxing triple workload is the result of telling women, 'You can be anything you want', which ignores the persisting, barely veiled sexism in our communities and households. It's Western feminism at its most facile, delivered at half-term, unformed and unsupported by the power structures that drive our economy. It's a rigged game, a terrible double bind based on an awful lie: if you work hard enough, you'll be rewarded. You'll finally be allowed into the club.

Schools such as my own failed to tell their students that this club is owned by the boys, and you'll have to play by their rules to remain relevant. So, we're set up to fail, scaling corporate heights post-tertiary degrees, burning bright into our early 30s... before crashing out of

‘serious business’ if we have children, compromised by life’s realities. Babies need feeding. Supermarkets need visiting, as do doctors and your parents, too. Women feel stretched and apologetic about having to negotiate flexible working hours with their employers. They accept roles that are less dynamic than they deserve, wrung out and shamed by the caring, the rearing, the feeding, the cleaning. Our domestic responsibilities are like some kind of dirty secret, not to be spoken about in corporate environs at the cost of our reputations. I call bullshit on the lie we’ve been told about the wide possibilities a woman’s life presents and the structures we have allowed to hold us captive.

The book you are holding in your energised hands is a manifesto for women, a practical call to action. It’s an invitation to live life on your own terms, and a guidebook for taking the first steps towards independence and creativity. Accepting this challenge means totally sidestepping the structures we’re told give us social currency and forging an existence that suits the real life you lead, that makes pockets of time for your passions, your partner, your children and your parents. It means the end of apologising for who you are, what you are and your responsibilities.

It also means the beginning of hard work. For this quest, you will need to be brave.

Let’s be real. Life is a mixture of ups and downs, challenges and victories. Don’t spend life hiding from the difficulties coming your way – a scary, path-changing event is coming for all of us, sure as birth and death. You can’t avoid the hard stuff. But you can CHOOSE your hard, which makes a fundamental difference in your journey through the gross-out. Choosing your hard doesn’t remove life’s stressors, nor does it guarantee plain sailing. But what it does guarantee is that you’re in the driving seat of your destiny, moving full-crank into a future that reflects who you are 24-7. The painful war between the ‘business’ you and the actual you will no longer have the ammunition to be waged,

Can you be brave, just for today?

because your bravery in choosing to live life on your own terms will give you a permanent passcard to living without apology.

I want this for you. You want this for you.

Women stepping into their power by choosing to live 24-7 lives of business, passion, family and self-care is the only true way to address gender inequality and the imbalance of power. This book gives you the roadmap to begin this process of realising your most fulfilling life by capitalising upon your strengths, your intelligence and your divine intuition. This intelligence lies within you already, waiting quietly for your energy and bravery to bring it to life. Mark my words: your business is the key that will unlock the door to freedom. It is the ultimate teacher. Business isn't just for men. It's not just for people with degrees, or those from money with fat overdrafts to support them through lean times. It's not just for white people. It's for EVERYONE.

There is no secret to success in business. There is only the choice to accept total responsibility for your life.

This is your moment to be brave.

Just for today.

If you can do that for me, together we can build your business and change the trajectory of your life.

With great love and support,

Iolanthe

Introduction

Finding your business course

Business is personal.

Many's the time I've heard the phrase, 'It's just business, it's not personal'. I've heard this from the lips of colleagues and friends explaining their reasons for making a choice between two service providers – be they real estate agents, house painters or nannies. This phrase is presented to the disappointed recipient as a form of kindness. In Western society, where polite obfuscation is our preference, this catch-all 'letting you down easy' phrase is used to hide all manner of useful conversations and practical feedback. The primary function of this lazy expression is to be a smokescreen against guilt: it protects the 'decider' from considering that maybe, just maybe, their decision-making process should be informed by more than the lowest price. Of course, we don't always deserve to win business – our offering might not match a client, or we might have a gap in our offering. In these cases, if we've put time and effort into presenting our service with care and intention, the least the would-be client should offer is a fair, transparent assessment of why we lost. Platitudes such as 'It's just business, it's not personal' do a great disservice to all of us.

I reject this lazy expression entirely. For me, business *is* personal. My business is an extension of me: it's my talents, my intentions and my focus made real. It's the lifeblood of my existence, giving me the energy I need to live in comfort and the resources I need to offer others meaningful work. My business is as personal to me as my child: it is my creation, and I am its mother.

I understand that for many of you, 'Business is personal' is a difficult notion to let into your heart. There's an emotional risk should your business be rejected, if you believe that you are your business. 100 Days of Brave is all about taking nervous steps into the big blue beyond, taking small sips of emotional risk like (empowering!) medicine each day – and in just over three months you WILL have a business and begin taking steps to living life on your own terms.

How does this idea sit with you? Do you believe that business is personal? What emotions does this bring up for you?

Let me tell you, the emotional risk of associating yourself with your business on the deepest level is worth it. That's because your business is about to become an additional member of your family, and without profound devotion and passion, it won't work. Your 100 Days of Brave might pass quickly, but not without consuming you, exciting you, frightening you, depressing you and emboldening you at one time or another. This life-changing journey you've chosen is a time for big emotions, connecting with intuition and committing to yourself.

On this journey, you will have people you never thought interested in you surprise you with their support and generosity. You will have the opportunity to reassess some of your closest friendships and familial ties. Some of the people who should be enthusiastic about your business will shut you down. Some of them might bring out the old chestnut, 'It's just business, it's not personal'. You might try to explain away the negative responses to your adventure into freedom and business. The reality is that people who question your capacity to have a business – or choose not to support your business when

they really should – are being challenged by your rebirth. Just by holding this book in your hands, you are braver than many people who surround you – you’re readying yourself to experience 100 Days of Brave, you badass.

So, here’s how it works:

- **Brave Beginnings – Meeting Your Business:** Your first trimester is all about free-flowing imagination, looking for the business of your future in the clues of your past, connecting with your intuition, addressing gaps in the market, looking critically at your strengths and conducting research into the viability of your potential business. During this month, you decide upon your startup business; this is a time of dreams grounded in reality and market forces. Make no bones about it: you’re about to become a business owner.
- **Building Brave – Bringing Your Business into Being:** Your second trimester is about the process of coaxing your business concept into being. It’s such a cracking month! You’ll be deciding on your business name, registering details with the relevant tax authorities (I promise you this is more exciting than it sounds), branding like a boss and legitimising your project. 100 Days of Brave isn’t about creating naff businesses that are half-baked: your business will become a big, badassed, branded reality that others will RESPEKT.
- **Being Brave – Working in and on Your Business:** The last trimester is when you climb your Mount Everest. The 100 Days of Brave community and I will be here to celebrate your wins and support you through your challenges. Like birthing a real live babe, you’re about to birth a real live business, babe. Same same, but different. During this period of time, you’ll be working in your business, reaching out to potential customers, following them up and networking. Once you come out of this last

trimester, you will be a business owner. I'm so excited for you and all the potential we're about to release!

This is what you'll need to make 100 Days of Brave work for you:

The will to be brave, just for today.

That's it.

Well, you'll also need an internet connection and an hour or so a day to work on your business with real focus. And I mean FOCUS – no Facebooking or distractions from your purpose.

If you've got the will and the wi-fi, I've got the way. Know that, as of right now, you are only 100 days away from having your business. How frickin' exciting is that?!

Support for the brave

Throughout the next three-and-a-bit months, I've got your back – and so does the 100 Days of Brave community. Here are a variety of ways to cheer your Brave journey on:

- Join the private **100 Days of Brave** Facebook Group for daily support.
- Use your **100 Days of Brave** Playbook to document your growth and achievements (100daysofbrave.com/resources).
- Book a one-on-one **100 Days of Brave** intensive session with me. (iolanthe gabrie.com/contact).

Imagine yourself as Bilbo Baggins at the start of *The Hobbit*. Sure, you're a little nervous to be leaving Bag End, but you know there are wild adventures to be had away from the comfort of your hobbit-hole. The reward? Life on your own terms.

Go get it, girl.