

## Background basics

If it's true that behind every great man, there is a great woman. Then it stands to reason that behind every great clay, there might be an equally great woman, too. Carrie Story is the developer and manufacturer of a line of metal clays. Occasionally, she will teach students how to work with the metal clays – leading them through the clay's unique properties and abilities. "My art is the hobby behind the clay. I love clay. It is my passion. I love creating with it. However, I am more successful making the clay than creating art to sell. So, to pay my bills, I must focus more effort on

technical properties than creative," she assessed.

While working in this still-new field, Story has relied upon the moral support and understanding of her husband. "He gave me the confidence to jump in headfirst and continues to stand by my decisions while offering clear advice when I need it," she shared. "I would say I manage to move forward in my business because I have a very positive attitude about things in general. If something doesn't work, just try something else. There is never a wrong answer or move. It just might not have been the best one. Everyone has constant opportunities for improvement. Don't be afraid to make a move because it might not be the right one. Just make the move and work through the challenges as they come."

## Handmade insights

One of Story's major decisions has been to remain a small business. This is a conscious and well-thought-out business model. "This means I am always looking for ways to be competitive as a small business, not trying to compete with the large players. I spend vast amounts of time trying to determine what the large players are missing and fill those customer needs. There is a reason the customers come to me. They want something that is different. They want the things that no one else has."

As a small-business owner, Story has the ability to establish one-on-one connections and to use that individual knowledge to her company's advantage. "When presented with a problem, I will normally try to step back and say to myself, 'If I were the customer, what would I want?' That little question has gotten me through some very difficult decisions."

## Climbing over challenges

Like all of the HEY honorees, Story has had her fill of setbacks and snafus. Her optimism, determination, and indomitable spirit combine to see her through. "I have faced many roadblocks. The challenges themselves are what motivate me. I think a competitive nature can be very helpful in many busi-



**Above from left:** One of Story's pieces being worn. Photo by Carrie Story  
• Story working hard. Photo by Ashley Lozano

**Left:** An example of Story's metal clay necklaces. Photo by Linda Purcell

ness dealings. The desire to win in every business move can be instinctual. I don't always achieve the goal, but that is a good thing as well, for it teaches me another valuable lesson."

There are specific challenges that Story has encountered, and these have also worked as life primers: "It is important to maintain a positive attitude and a little competitive nature to overcome obstacles like existing contracts that could hamper new business development. With a positive attitude, I can generally find a way through the issue and continue moving forward with the idea."

The metal clay field is relatively new, and its adherents are in an artistic revolution of sorts. Story's company's name, Clay Revolution, addresses that "upstart/new kid in town" identity. Without a long-storied past to draw upon, she finds it difficult at times to see into the next few decades. "Predicting the future is by far the hardest challenge. Adjusting to changes and developing new plans is a daily routine. I have become accustomed to dealing with things as they come. However, when planning for future investments and new concepts, I find myself questioning which is the right move," Story stated.

## Making a difference

When Story leads a teaching session or a hands-on workshop, she bonds with her class. In fact, this is one of her most treasured experiences. "There is nothing more satisfying than seeing my students achieve their goals. The joy they feel when they reach a goal or learn a difficult lesson is overwhelming. Nothing can make you feel prouder than knowing you helped to get them to that goal. I watch them grow, support their needs, and help motivate them to continue every day," Story remarked.

Another moment that Story will cherish is her invitation to develop and manage the Camp PMC Certification Program. "The endeavor is a huge undertaking. However, the honor of working on this project will stick with me for years to come. It will help perpetuate my small business and increase customer awareness for the Clay Revolution brand. I am looking forward to more exciting years to come!" *HB*