

Women In Wellness: Sharon Whiteley of TRU47 on the Five Lifestyle Tweaks That Will Help Support People's Journey Towards Better Wellbeing



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As a part of my series about the women in wellness, I had the pleasure of interviewing Sharon Whiteley, founder of TRU47.

TRU47 is an innovative company, supporting well-being with silver, nature's first TRU antimicrobial agent. TRU47 offers silver and copper based products including silver masks, 99.99% Pure Silver woven wearables, mists and more. All TRU47 personal care products are made from proprietary blends of wild-crafted organic essential oils, Himalayan sea salts and colloidal silver.

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Thank you so much for joining us in this interview series! Our readers would love to “get to know you” better. Can you share your “backstory” with us?

Close to six years ago, I woke up sick after a fun dinner at a popular local restaurant in town and couldn't walk. I was doubled over with pain to the point I needed to go the emergency room where I was told I had burst appendicitis. Before I could respond that I knew intuitively I did not, the attending doc said I had to go on antibiotics. I told him I couldn't because they would make me nauseous and sick to which he responded, “young lady, what you have will make you more nauseous and definitely sicker”. Given my upbringing where traditional western doctors prevailed, I did as he said. Sure enough, the next day I felt sicker than a dog. It was then that I had my AHA moment and remembered that “silver” was reported to be a strong antibacterial and virus inhibiting natural element. The ‘calling’ was loud and clear and off I went, devoting the next year to learning all I could about silver. This included investing in independent research to conduct studies on what became our hero product line (I suppose I should say, *heroine*) called Stellarcleenz®. Our first product was a 99.99% pure ionically plated silver woven fabric cloth which one could use effectively wet, dry, or damp. I knew from documented research that silver was scientifically proven to inhibit the growth bacteria, fungi, and viruses. My love affair with this precious metal grew and led me to create an entire company focused on silver — now called TRU47.

Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you started your career? What were the main lessons or takeaways from that story?

The most interesting happened with TRU47 also proved to be the most opportune because of the pandemic this past year. I have always embraced the belief that in every problem there is a solution. When challenges arise, I become inspired to mine the opportunity and find ways to excavate the silver lining — in this case, literally.

Can you share a story about the biggest mistake you made when you were first starting? Can you tell us what lesson you learned from that?

We all know the adage about the word ASSUME...It was a biggie for me with TRU47. I “assumed” that what we had created made perfect sense after spending a year researching all the attributes and scientific benefits of silver. This led to believing that with a bit of education, the mainstream public would easily embrace silver’s merits and be fans of our first silver cloth product. Not so. Many could not buy the fact that rubbing your hands robustly for 8 to 10 seconds with a dry silver cloth would inhibit the growth of pesky bacteria and germs.

None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?

There have been many, however, one man comes immediately to mind. His name was Jim Rouse and he was regarded as the Walt Disney of the shopping center world — a visionary extraordinaire. I had the good fortune early on in my entrepreneurial career to work on one of the first major specialty retail centers in America, the Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston, also known as Quincy Market in Haymarket Square. There I created the Bull Market, a mode of transitory merchandising where 4’x6’ pushcarts (indigenous to the area) became a merchant’s storefront and selling fixture. On grand opening day with rats still running around this desolate area, Mr. Rouse was helping me spray paint storage spaces on a lower level. When I openly fretted about how my pushcart concept and 52 leased out carts occupying a prime area would be received, he smiled, tried to comfort me and simply said, “Sharon, when you try something new and innovative all you can do is ‘run it up the flag pole and see how it flies; you can’t do more than that’”. Fortunately, we flew big time and this concept became a model for shopping centers globally and the forerunner to popular pop-up stores and kiosks that were birthed there as well.

Ok perfect. Now let's jump to our main focus. When it comes to health and wellness, how is the work you are doing helping to make a bigger impact in the world?

Every venture I have ever been drawn to create focuses on positivity, enhancing the human spirit and one's well-being. TRU47, is all about creating safe, natural, non-toxic, and alcohol-free products made of pure woven silver and or are infused colloidal silver. All we create is grounded in science or supported by empirical data. I'll add that some creations in our current social distancing silver product line, made of an elegant pure silver mesh, are also beautiful. We believe feeling pretty is additionally a wellness benefit, especially in current times when we don't have the opportunity to easily preen and shine.

Can you share your top five "lifestyle tweaks" that you believe will help support people's journey towards better well-being? Please give an example or story for each.

Get Grounded. By this I mean connecting directly with the earth's natural stored energy in the ground, called electrons. This is also called earthing. One can do this by going barefoot, wearing grounding shoes that are conductive, gardening (getting knees and hands in the dirt), swimming in the ocean or a lake — and yes, hugging a tree. There are also products available where one can ground indoors and while asleep. I had a heart attack three years ago and being grounded I believe saved my life; it has a lot to do with blood viscosity. A decade ago, I created the first grounding footwear company called *pluggz* which I sold four years ago. Two years later I agreed to partner on re-inventing a new grounding footwear venture; it's called HARMONY783. Because of my literal life altering event I felt my work in this arena wasn't over, therefore, more shoes!

Get enough sleep. We hear this from experts around the world and it is true. The body needs to rest and replenish. Recharging gives one the energy to also think more clearly, be less reactive and more stable when making decisions. It overall, makes you feel better. All-nighters during the week with catch up time on the weekends is not a good substitute for consistent sound sleeping hygiene. There are many natural supplements that can aid as well, such as melatonin.

Get at least 20 of minutes of hearty exercise a day. I grew up in a “neck up family’ where there was lots of emphasis on brain time and doing well in school and little regard for the body below. Never was I taught below the neck was the vessel that sustained life. It was also before Title 9, so I was a cheerleader and not a soccer player. The sports I love — hiking, biking, and skiing are not aerobic, so I try and walk a fair amount even if not ultra-robustly, every day.

Just Move and Just Breathe. We have also heard this from experts over and over — and the accompanying phrase, *sitting is the new smoking* (a habit I unfortunately did for many years). Getting up regularly if you are prone to sitting at a desk all day does wonders. Stretching also really helps. I have recently taken up Pilates which has improved not only my sense of balance, but also aided in learning new breathing techniques.

Mini Meditations. Again, we all have read and know that meditation is an “ultimate practice” in the healthful arena. What was valuable for me to learn was even 5 to 10 minutes a day was nourishing and did positive things for my body, mind and I am sure, soul, too. I had to make a deal with my “monkey mind” to stay quiet for short periods of time. Baby steps worked and it has become a lot easier to expand this reflective time being quiet.

I’m going to add a sixth because it does really work, **Expletives.** I was told a while ago that sometimes mouthing many a four-letter word (ones most of us were taught never to use growing up) is a stress reducer. Well sure enough I find this so. Sometimes, sounding off when something warrants a highly charged, emotional and irritated (aka pissed off) response, it does relieve stress — usually ending usually in laughter, which is even more beneficial. Not proud of this one, but it is true.

If you could start a movement that would bring the most amount of wellness to the most amount of people, what would that be?

It would be the practice of getting grounded and I hope with my new shoes venture we can make inroads on this front. Not only does grounding reduce inflammation which is at the root cause of many pervasive conditions, but also several chronic diseases. Additional benefits include increasing circulation, normalizing blood pressure, reducing stress and contributing to a return to a more normal state of homeostasis.

What are your “5 Things I Wish Someone Told Me Before I Started” and why?

1. **Trust your gut.** There are many explanations attributed to this pithy phrase. The body DOES KNOW, however; and they are all true in my view. If you intuitively have feelings about people, an opportunity or a situation calling for action, pay attention if you feel uneasy and before you commit, engage in further exploration. The body again knows.
2. **The process you engage in when making a deal or executing a partnership will bear on what that relationship will ultimately look like when underway.** It is like foreshadowing early on in a film. There isn't too much more to say about this lesson. I learned it many times over to the point I am mindful of all the signs before embarking together on a project or in a partnership. When they are right, $1 + 1 = 11$. When they are wrong, it is a 0-sum game. Maybe even worth a minus.
3. **Love what you do.** Very simply there will be days especially if you are pioneering in a new field, exploring new ground, or creating an innovative product that you will hit a wall. Being passionate and loving what you do will be the only fuel you have to go over it, around it, in it or through it, to come out the other end.
4. **Make no room for Naysayers.** Negative people or those who are just always critical and judgmental need to be eliminated from your life. Period. Your values cannot be compromised or ever rationalized. Believe you can do anything you set out to do. If you don't hold that view of yourself when starting out, find a wise peer or others who unconditionally are able and willing to be a fortifying mentor, guide, or true friend. Don't let anyone ever squelch your dreams. Sometimes this is easier said than done. Life is precious and know you have something to contribute to the world.
5. **Listen, Ask to Understand — and be mindful of Energy.** A little over 15 years ago I lost my voice because of what proved to be an unnecessary surgery on my thyroid. It left me with a paralyzed vocal cord. I couldn't speak for 15 months until I had reluctantly had a gortex implant surgically inserted. I must admit, it was not an optimal state given I was also raising capital for a new venture. I learned to listen more and talk less. I also gained patience to ask with the intention of understanding, versus, solving or retorting — or being a know-it-all. Most of all I learned about energy. We have all heard the phrase about “it's not what you say but what you do” and we need to “walk the talk”. I believe there is another level here...and that is the intention by which you speak and do. People pick up on your energy. Being authentic, vulnerable, and genuine while not visible are felt and matter most of all.

Sustainability, veganism, mental health, and environmental changes are big topics now. Which one of these causes is dearest to you, and why?

They are all meaningful and three of the four are most relevant in my life, with veganism not being a called path. The earth and the planet are at the core of every enterprise I have ever been drawn to which puts sustainability and environmentalism together as a strong duo. I can't separate them out.

What is the best way our readers can follow you on social media?

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