

Q+A

The inspirational speaker, meditation expert and author talks about changing careers, juggling priorities and learning to switch off

Jody Shield



Q What prompted you to take this career path? Eight years ago, I was working in advertising – late nights, little sleep and partying too much. I was burned out and exhausted and something had to change. I booked a one-way ticket to South America in an attempt to ‘find myself’ again. During my travels, I spent 12 days on a retreat in the Amazon jungle with an indigenous tribe, and had an intense inner transformation. After 10 months, I went back to work, hoping things would be different, but they weren’t. One day, a voice inside me boomed, ‘Quit your job!’ and I knew it was the right time. I handed in my notice on the spot and left.

Q Why did meditation appeal to you? I discovered meditation in the jungle. It served as my way into healing and helped me understand the connection between mind and body. I experienced huge benefits from it, and it was instrumental in my transformation. Suddenly, I had space to connect to everything I was thinking and feeling, in a way that allowed me to make sense of it, and then act on it.

Q What has been the biggest challenge you’ve faced so far? In my job, I need to be the clearest version of myself to be able to work with people without my own baggage getting in the way. This means I’m shifting, changing and facing my fears every day, and that is difficult.

Q In your work, you wear many hats. How do you balance them all? It’s important to have a strong, solid team behind you so you can delegate as much as possible. Meditation every morning keeps me energised,

clear-headed and focused. To avoid feeling overwhelmed, I set a clear intention to focus on one thing at a time. I even block out slots in my diary to stay focused on one task.

Q In our digital world, how do you switch off? I turn my phone onto airplane mode at certain times of the day, and I’m learning how to answer emails in set windows. At lunch, I close my laptop and take a walk, or meditate for 20 minutes. Also, I try and leave London once a month – I put on my out-of-office and really switch off.

Q What is one piece of advice you would give to others wanting to make a similar change in life? It’s so easy to say, but I honestly believe it’s better to jump and see what happens, than to always wonder what might have been. When I left my job, I was buying a flat, so it wasn’t the best timing – but there never is a good time. Don’t have regrets. Be proud that you tried, and know that there’s no shame in failure – in fact, it’s courageous.

Q What was the inspiration behind your book, *Life Tonic*? Everywhere I looked, people were suffering from burnout, exhaustion and a feeling of being disconnected from themselves. My events were proving popular, and I could see people were crying out for simple, practical self-help techniques. I wanted to provide a modern toolbox to help them address their need, and look at the different areas of their lives in their own time.

*Jody Shield is author of ‘Life Tonic’ (Yellow Kite, £14.99).
jodyshield.co.uk; @jodyshield*