

>>Snapshot



Mary Fenwick

Journalist

NUJ

Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?

I started out as a journalist, moved to corporate public affairs, then into networking events. My last permanent position was Director of the Whitehall and Industry Group. I've been self-employed since 2000 and am still standing!

Currently I write, speak and coach professionally. I'm interested in what gets in the way for people, especially women. I'm fascinated by the impact and influence of cultural stereotypes.

I'm massively proud of my role as the agony aunt for Psychologies Magazine. I feel my busy and interesting personal life has equipped me well for this role. In short, I divorced, remarried, which involved the integration of two families, then my husband died. While recovering from that, I had to rebuild my life including my extended family. In 2015, I presented a TEDx talk on Personal Transformation, which touched on some of my experiences.

I also do pro bono work with women in politics. I am passionate about helping women in public life. My driver is to get more women involved and support the ones that are already there. The overall goal is to increase the political power of women. Things are changing but not quickly enough and I love to help younger women to progress a little faster.

What do you like most about your work?

I love work on the days that I feel I bring my whole self to what I'm doing. I believe I should be open and vulnerable about my own struggles and think this makes me better at what I do. To facilitate a shift in someone through my work is amazing. I see a large part of my role as building communities.

I love that the theme of Psychologies Magazine is kindness, which I use in my work and public speaking.

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What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

The biggest challenge is creating regular, predictable income... that feeling of no safety net can be scary.

Have you added new skills to your portfolio over time?

I formally trained as a coach and developed myself as a professional speaker. I always did both of these things, now I am more professional about them.

I'm also brushing up my skills in creating professional presentation slides. A client recently re-did my slides for me, and the difference was outstanding.

Translating what I do by writing on-line training courses is my current project.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

Finding good teachers and the right environment that suits me. I love the space that FEU Training offers. We are all creatives, different but similar, and we are trained by creative freelances! FEU Training is just amazing.



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When selecting other training, you pay your money and take the risk that it might not be good. Then, if it's not, you don't just waste the money, but you lose the time that you have set aside for it too.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

- Negotiation Skills
- Getting Started with Vlogging
- Grow your freelance business via email marketing
- Speak up for yourself
- Face up to Networking

What are the most important things that you've learned?

I've put into action what I learned from the *Grow your business via email marketing* workshop by launching my own newsletter. The *Negotiation* workshop is relevant to everything! It helped me to re-evaluate what I know and gave me a fresh perspective.

The *networking* day was great too. I enjoyed seeing how the tutor ran the session, and I enjoyed actually networking on the day. Something that stuck with me was when the tutor said that as creative freelancers, we were all working in the stretch zone. So true.

I also really enjoyed *Speak up for yourself* and applied what I learned immediately. The workshops all help to build confidence in many different ways.

What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?

I love the FEU Training workshops for the energy and creative spaces they provide. It's the cross over between creativity and business that they offer. The skill of creativity is fundamental to human enjoyment and development at work. There is a two-way flow between creativity and business, and I think FEU Training captures that.

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FEU Training is amazing, and I would love it to continue.

Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creative?

No.

