



60 Seconds with...

JANE COUNSEL



You've got quite an impressive Bio. What are the standout achievements for you?

Thanks! Probably my work with Westpac in diversity. I was able to initiate programs that continue today. I'm also proud of creating the 100 Women of Influence Awards Program, which shines a light on women doing incredible things.

And I'm also incredibly proud of - and honoured - to be able to make a contribution to the USyd MBA program. I get to work with such talented current and future leaders. I co-facilitate programs on inclusive leadership, critical thinking and communication skills, which make the difference between good and great leaders.

You've had quite a diverse career: journalism, corporate affairs, diversity & inclusion, academia. Where is your natural home in terms of career?

I think there's been a consistent theme through all these roles. It's centred on curiosity about people, their stories and their journey. I started off as a journalist but this curiosity continues to inform what I do. Also a passion for communication, which again started with journalism, has been a continuing theme.

What made you take the plunge into coaching?

Towards the end of 2014 I took some time out of the corporate world. I reflected and realised that I'd always been 'coaching' but hadn't recognised it. I knew Reyna [Matthes] through her Women Leading work at Westpac, and she invited me to attend the Executive Central Coaching Academy. This helped me connect the dots and see that I really enjoyed doing it. Actually there was a major light bulb moment in terms of me really understanding the power of coaching people. It enabled me to connect those themes running through my career. And now I can help others unpack the next chapter of their careers.

I can see what you love about coaching. What are the challenges?

A couple of things. As a coach I can often see the big picture of a person's situation, but they're not ready to see it. People have to learn for themselves, and my role is to support that. The other challenge is time. Coaching can go off the boil simply because people are busy and have to reschedule. It's important that people are prepared to invest time in their development.

What are some of the big issues you are helping clients with right now?

I'm working with one client on stepping up and owning their leadership presence. It's a classic case of having technical expertise but not Emotional Intelligence. I'm helping them step into their unique leadership style and skill set.

The other issue I come across is people wanting to step up into the next role, but not really digging deep enough into the 'why'. Are they stepping up for the right reasons? Sometimes the motivation is simply their own 'ego' or internal 'competition' - it's important to unpack what's driving the motivation.

What does Jane Counsel do to relax?

Socializing is a favourite activity! I love to spend time with friends and family and I also enjoy hanging out with my fur family - my rescue cats and dog.

What books do you have by your bed?

Lots. The pile includes books I've started and books I plan to read when I've got time. They include Freeing Peter Grete, The Outliers, The Course of Love and Do Less, Achieve More. That's half of them!

Do you have a bucket list? What's on it?

I love travel, so anywhere I haven't been, like Africa, Alaska, India. I'd love to go and spend extended time in New York and Paris, just to immerse myself in the culture of those two beautiful cities. And spend a summer on the Amalfi Coast!