



60 Seconds with...

RHYLL GARDNER



You've had a stellar corporate career. What motivated the shift to executive coaching?

I got to a stage where I wanted more flexibility and variety. I'm really proud of my career, but decided that I wanted to carve out a bit of time for myself. There's no time for that when you're a corporate executive.

I'm loving the coaching, and am also involved with a bit of management consulting and some board directorships. The coaching is wonderful because you can help others and at the same time reflect on your own experience. Corporate life can be quite gruelling so some reflection time is important.

Is this a big change of lifestyle for you?

Having the flexibility to be able to take a couple of hours for myself is great. I'm working from home and so although I still get the professional work done, I can fit in other things, such as going to a Pilates class. It's a more of a balance of work and personal wellbeing.

You've got two wheaten terriers. How do they feel about it all?

They love it when we're at home, because then they're allowed inside and can mooch around on the couch. We're strict owners - when we're out, they're out!

In what ways does your corporate experience equip you to be a great executive coach?

You certainly bring all your experience of leadership - the good and the bad of it all - to the table. Corporate leaders do a lot of good things, but the pressure of it all takes its toll.

I've had a lot of experience of bureaucracies and the politics of organisations. I know what it takes to be seen as a (potential) leader. I know what upcoming leaders need to think about - their team, business development, how they are seen externally, how they present.

Is this all tougher for women?

Women in my experience have to work twice as hard. And they do work twice as hard and do it really well.

Do you think we'll reach a stage when it doesn't have to be this way?

One day, but not in my lifetime. There's still so much unconscious bias. I think that the only way to get rid of it is via the upbringing of girls and boys. Things are improving, but there's a long way to go.

Is there a particular industry or client type that you resonate with?

I guess you could say that finance/financial services is my sweet spot, because of my own career. I've had experience of running businesses, and leading on strategy, mergers and acquisitions, so these and many other coaching skill areas are transferable across industries.

What do you see as the challenges for an executive coach?

On a personal level it can be emotionally draining if you buy into the client's issues. Self-care is always a good idea.

Was the transition to coaching a simple one?

Pretty painless! Once I made the decision it was really just about getting the ducks lined up. I did the Executive Central Coaching Academy Program in Brisbane - it was fantastic.

I saw in your BIO that you like food, wine and travel. Favourite restaurant?

In Brisbane, GOMA and Montrachet.

Preferred wine?

I'm actually in a 'non-drinking gin phase'. I found a lovely gin called Botanic Australis, from the Atherton Tableland. It's infused with lillypilly, bunya nut and lemon myrtle. However, I'm in a 3-month abstinence so it's a bit academic right now.

Favourite destination?

It would have to be Lake Como. There's something very special about that place.

You'll find Rhyll's Bio on the Executive Central website.