

The ABC's of Work & Life

J is for Just Keep Going

Katie Mehnert gets into the gist of J.

Today's article is dedicated to the lost, the heartbroken and the stressed.

I've been there. I've done that, and, in some ways, I've written a book about it. We don't share the same situations and experiences, but we all go through it. It's called life. And sometimes you have to be reminded of it. I know you're tired of hearing, "This too shall pass" or "You're going to be fine". *So I'm going to send you a different message.*

Just keep going.

Ten years ago this week I was approaching 29 (I guess I'm giving away my age. I turn 39 in three weeks). At the ripe young age of nearly 30 I had survived a lot life's challenges and spent a lot of time doing awful things to my body. Eating became therapy that didn't talk back to me so I did lots of it. I used to be shameful about my weight and health issues, but I'm not any longer. I regained control of my life because I decided it was time to put my health first.

Back then I was just shy of 275 pounds (124 kilograms). For someone who is 5'3" (162cm), it hit me pretty hard that it's one thing to survive cancer, something you cannot control, and

another to eat a path to your own death by not making healthy choices. After emergency after emergency, and lost job opportunities, depression and plenty of social pressure, I was beginning to feel helpless.

Desperate to do something, I began a transformation that would change my life. Slowly, I began the arduous path of changing my lifestyle. Within six months, I lost 50 pounds (22 kilograms) on my own, and then sought out the advice of a doctor to have bariatric surgery to help me lose the rest. In total, it took me about a year, but I lost nearly 150 pounds (68 kilograms), almost half of my body weight.

To qualify for surgery, I had to go through behavioural assessments and other means to assure the medical team I was a candidate to be successful for this transformation. Losing weight isn't about the act of losing, it's about the modification you make to your life to live healthier.

Ten years later, I find myself still a healthy adult. I manage my weight and stay fit. Despite gaining a lot of weight after I had my only child, Ally, I've still managed to maintain it at the right level. I still love food, but I'm aware of

my behaviour and how I respond to stress. I run now and eat only to live, and not the other way around.

Has this been easy? No. It's easy though when we look at others and judge their lives when we have no real reason or data to do so. Ever look at someone and wonder how he or she became so successful, or how he or she was able to accomplish something?

Here's the secret: **they just kept going.**

Life and work is about the fight. It's about putting one foot in front of the other and making progress, one step at a time. It's also about realising that while you may "keep going, others may not "keep up". Ah yes, sometimes the people around you won't understand your journey. And they don't need to; **it's not for them.**

So my message this week is, just keep going. It's worth it... whatever your struggle in life or work.

Lost your job? *(It wasn't for you.)* Making sense of a recent loss? *(You're not in control.)* Breaking up with a spouse, a friend, or a group of people who just don't get or want your awesomeness? *(It's their loss.)* Don't stop, my friend.

Just keep going.

And even though the bills are mounting *(You'll get to them soon enough)*, and your car's engine light is blinking *(It can wait)*, you are here. *(Feel blessed)*. You are alive and you are going to get through this. *(Yep, you have to believe it!)*

Just keep going.

This crazy uncomfortable place is what makes life beautiful. *Didn't you know?* We aren't supposed to know all that's ahead of us. That's the "remarkableness" (yes, that's a word) of a long run down interesting back roads. Soak up the feeling of being in the great wilderness of change and uncertainty. Straight paths, like 'dreadmills';

Sometimes the people around you won't understand your journey. They don't need to, it's not for them.

- @overlyexclusive



Katie Mehnert then (left) and now.

are for the boring, the uninteresting, and the sheltered. Curves in the road make your journey unique, interesting and rewarding. When the whole weight of the world feels like it's breathing down your back, stop yourself. *It doesn't have to.* It's your choice. It's your marathon. It's your pace. Just remember that good things come to those who work their butts off and never give up.

Just keep going.

Thanks so much for your stories and emails. I'd love to hear more about you. Keep them coming. And remember, just keep going!

Katie Mehnert is a global talent development and change executive with 17 years of helping people and companies get curious, connect, share, grow and perform better. She has recently been appointed CEO of Pink Petro; www.pinkpetro.com, a platform to connect women and men in the energy industry and advance females in her industry. Prior to her latest venture, Katie was a Director with BP, joining after the Deepwater Horizon incident and worked in various leadership roles worldwide with Shell. She's a dynamic speaker and author having been featured in LinkedIn, CEO.com, Business Insider, and Yahoo. As a work-in-progress marathon runner, wife and working mom, you can follow her musings on balancing it all on her blog at www.katiemehnert.com, or email her at katie@katiemehnert.com